

# ***International Working-Class and Communist Movement. Historical Record***

***(1830s to mid-1940s)***



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**Historical Record  
(1830s to mid-1940s)**

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ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЙ ОПЫТ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОГО РАБОЧЕГО  
И КОММУНИСТИЧЕСКОГО ДВИЖЕНИЯ

Под редакцией В.В. Загладина

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### *Introduction*

The almost 150-year history of the international communist and working-class movement is, in fact, a history of vigorous struggle waged by the revolutionary vanguard of the working class for a cardinal social remaking of the world. It is a history of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism, a science of cognition and transformation of society, a history of struggle against the falsifiers and enemies of this science. It is a history of the communist parties, the truly revolutionary parties of the working class possessing a scientific approach to reality and the ways of transforming it. It is a history of heroic exploits of the progressive workers of the world in the revolutionary overthrow of the old social system and the building of socialism and communism in its place. It is a history of the strengthening alliance of the working class with all the other sections of the working people, the alliance of Communists with the other political parties and organisations upholding the cause of social progress. Briefly speaking, it is largely a history of social progress itself, of its most powerful, dynamic and promising force.

This history is part of the general process of social development. This is a fact recognised today by all, including the bitter enemies of socialism, communism and the working-class movement. However, these enemies think the history of the working-class movement, and especially of the communist movement, is of secondary importance or even a chance phenomenon in world development. To them, the working-class movement is a deadly enemy and the communist movement is something illegal which has to be destroyed the sooner the better.

Considering the class nature of capital, it is possible to see this point of view of our ideological adversaries. They regard all Communists as fiends just because the Communists come out against what is most sacred for the bourgeoisie—private property. They seek to destroy the Communists just because the Communists work to abolish exploitation, that main source of the class domination of capital. Considering all this, it is not surprising at all that anti-communism has become an ideological platform of reactionary anti-democratic policy, a policy of onslaught on the rights and social gains of the popu-



lar masses, a policy of the arms race, cold war, and struggle against socialism.

But all the postulates of anti-communist ideologists and politicians are proved wrong by life, by the activities of the working-class movement and its communist vanguard.

During the past 150 years the communist movement has traversed a long and glorious path from the Communist League, the first truly revolutionary workers' organisation, which based its work on scientific principles but originally had a membership of merely a few hundred, to the present-day communist movement operating in almost one hundred countries, and having over 80 million people in its ranks; from the first independent actions by workers against bourgeois domination to the Paris Commune, the first revolutionary power of working people; from the 1905 revolution to the February and ultimately October 1917 revolutions in Russia—the first breach by the working class of the chain of imperialist domination; from the revolutions in a number of European countries of the 1920s, all of which had been defeated but left a profound imprint on the life of their peoples, to the victorious people's democratic and socialist revolutions of the 1940s and 1950s; from the embarkment of Mongolia on non-capitalist development towards socialism, which was the first country to do so, to the emergence of a family of revolutionary-democratic states which not only proclaimed socialism their objective, but made practical steps to attain this noble goal.

The history of the working-class and communist movement is surely not an offshoot, but a main branch, of world development today. Since the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917, which placed the working class in the centre of the present epoch, this has been the main direction of world history. Precisely the working class, the working-class movement and the Communists indicate to mankind the chief direction of development, a path of solving the cardinal problems worrying billions of people today, a path leading to the communist future.

The history of the communist movement must be studied thoroughly and persistently. Its study lends one staunchness in defending revolutionary, socialist principles, teaching one how to fight for the most progressive goals—the goals of socialism and communism. This history gives one determination and optimism with regard to the future of mankind.

There may be, of course, different ways of studying the history of the communist movement. It can be viewed as a single whole, as a powerful stream of successive events and processes which can be examined in detail. This approach is well justified and instructive. Another way of studying

the history of communism is, for instance, to examine separately the development of its theoretical basis and the evolution of its strategy and tactics. One can limit oneself to studying the history of communist parties in a group of countries or a region of the world, or to studying the experience of the communist movement in most general terms. But each of these ways is in itself both interesting and productive. At present, however, the urgent task is to concentrate on the historical record of the communist movement or, in other words, on the history of its struggle for the socialist future of mankind, on its achievements, its setbacks and the efforts to overcome them.

It is symptomatic that the capitalist anti-Communists and a large segment of Social Democrats do not simply call in question the experience accumulated by the Communists, but are trying, in fact, to besmear it to the extent of making it null and void. The reactionaries, Lenin once said, seek "to make the people forget the forms of struggle, the forms of organisation, and the ideas and slogans which the revolutionary period begot in such profusion and variety".<sup>1</sup> The bourgeoisie is fearful of the Communists' studying their own experience.

Regretfully, Communists themselves sometimes underestimate this experience. There have been instances of scornful attitude to it, and even allegations that new developments nullify all that happened in the past. Some of them ask: "How can one be guided in his actions now, at the end of the 20th century, by conclusions made 80 or 100 years back?"

Any experience, of course, including that of the communist movement, has a historical aspect to it, for any epoch, and any country tend to have specifics of their own, which determine the traditions and methods of the class struggle waged by the workers. And the study of the experience of Communists, of the working-class movement as a whole, requires, no doubt, a historical approach, so that it should be examined with due regard for the situation at a definite time.

That historical approach allows one to single out more and less important aspects in the experience of the communist movement: events of general and secondary importance, law-governed and spontaneous developments, etc.

But the historical development is complex and multifaceted, and there are sharp turns in it, and sometimes what seemed to be a thing of the past, comes up as topical again. This happens most often during crucial periods of history, and this is precisely what our epoch is.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Against Boycott", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 38.

Therefore it is all the more important to study most carefully all the experience accumulated by the Communists. There should be no nihilism, and no "forgetfulness". The true revolutionary should know well what has been achieved by his predecessors. The purpose of studying revolutionary experience, as Lenin saw it, is "to promote the spread of the movement, the conscious selection of the means, ways, and methods of struggle that, with the least expenditure of effort, will yield the most substantial and permanent results".<sup>1</sup>

Another point to note here is that a dogmatic approach to communist experience or blind worship of it are just as inadmissible as its total negation. This gives rise to fear of a critical analysis of the past, to inability to see and properly assess its lessons and outline ways of creative, not scholastic, use of the past experience in new historical conditions.

A creative, critical attitude to past experience rules out distortion or, moreover, total neglect of the commonly recognised principles of the communist movement, of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. Incidentally, precisely experience teaches us that any deviation from the fundamental principles of the doctrine of Marx, Engels and Lenin inevitably narrows down the possibilities of the communist movement, hindering its advance towards the revolutionary goals.

Communists are studying their own experience and that of their comrades in struggle not for the sake of pure knowledge. They study it for a practical purpose of sharing it with the masses and inspiring them to victorious revolutionary struggle.

The experience of the past can be realised mainly through the revolutionary practices of the popular masses. But since the popular masses cannot themselves produce adequate revolutionary consciousness, so they cannot profoundly study and assimilate the experience accumulated by generations of revolutionaries. This, precisely, is an important and responsible mission of the Communists.

The group of authors who have produced this book, which is a survey of the historical experience of the communist movement, concentrated on the fundamental aspects of this movement's history in the context of the lessons of its struggle. They did not intend to offer a detailed review of the evolution of the communist movement. Rather, they made an analysis of the main developments and processes to bring out the most important aspects of what the history of the communist movement teaches us.

That was how they approached both the content of various chapters, and the form of their presentation. This accounts, in particular, for the different style and character of various parts of the book. Naturally, their approach to the analysis of long-term processes and the events that took place in definite periods of time could not be the same.

The authors do not regard their analysis as exhaustive. They hope nonetheless that the book, written in the mid-1980s, will be of use to those who want to study the experience of the communist movement. The authors welcome any suggestions and critical remarks of the readers which will undoubtedly help them in their future work.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Revolutionary Days", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 1977, p. 104.



## Chapter One

### *Formation of the Proletariat. Its First Independent Actions*

The capitalist mode of production emerged way back in the 16th century. The first period in its history, the period of manufactory, lasted almost two centuries during which the rate of development was extremely low. The long "incubation" phase, as Karl Marx put it, of machine production brought about an industrial revolution in the late 18th century, first only in England.

The industrial revolution, which started in several European countries and North America at the turn of the 19th century, was above all a revolution in production techniques, that is, manual labour was replaced by mechanised labour and, on that basis, capitalist manufactories gave way to a factory system of capitalist production. The industrial revolution set the stage for a rapid growth of productive forces in capitalist society, for the emergence of large-scale machine industry, greater social division of labour, and the emergence of new cities and industrial centres. The main social outcome of the industrial revolution was that capitalism was established as a socio-economic system with two main antagonistic classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

In that period the development of capitalist relations was obstructed mainly by the existence of feudal and absolutist regimes, under which political power was in the hands of the nobility, and the nobility was adamant about retaining its domination. This explains why the transition from feudalism to capitalism was going on amidst severe class battles and numerous bourgeois revolutions. The revolutions were joined by the broad popular masses—the peasants, the urban poor, the working people. That struggle culminated in the Great French Bourgeois Revolution of 1789 which ushered in a new epoch in world history: the bourgeois class was placed in the centre of social development and the way was paved for the triumph of the capitalist mode of production.

#### *Formation of the Industrial Proletariat. Early Forms of Its Class Struggle*

The first groups of workers appeared already in feudal society, heralding the incipience of the capitalist mode of pro-

duction. Under feudalism, however, the workers were not yet a class. They became a class only as a result of the industrial revolution. As the industrial revolution gained momentum, especially since the latter half of the 19th century, the proletariat was taking shape as a class in East European countries, in Australia, in a number of countries in Asia and Latin America, and then elsewhere in the world.

Everywhere the industrial proletariat emerged and developed according to specific historical conditions of various countries. But this process had general regularities common to them all. The conversion of feudal immediate producers (peasants above all) into proletarians freed them primarily of feudal bondage and guild despotism, that is, of personal dependence on the feudal lord. At the same time, it implied expropriation of the means of production they formerly owned, thus leaving them without the means of subsistence they used to have under feudalism. This is what Karl Marx wrote on that score: "The process, therefore, that clears the way for the capitalist system, can be none other than the process which takes away from the labourer the possession of his means of production; a process that transforms, on the one hand, the social means of subsistence and of production into capital, on the other, the immediate producers into wage-labourers."<sup>1</sup>

The social breeding ground of the industrial proletariat everywhere was the early proletarian and small proprietor sections of society in town and country whose position had grown largely unstable following the introduction of the factory system in industry and the spread of capitalist relations in agriculture.

The formation of the industrial working class under the ongoing industrial revolution has the following general features:

- the industrial proletariat grows rapidly in numbers, while the share of factory workers is steadily expanding;
- the industrial proletariat concentrates in definite areas, and its distribution in a country and among branches of industry is uneven;
- unskilled labour prevails among the factory workers;
- the proletariat is backward in terms of its make-up and heterogeneous;
- there is a considerable number of handicraft and manufactory workers among the industrial proletariat;
- migration processes have a decisive role to play as a source of the formation of the working class;
- various groups of the working class become gradually

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 668.

aware that they have common interests and that their interests are opposite to those of the ruling classes;

—corresponding forms of economic, social, and subsequently political organisation of the workers take shape and grow stronger;

—the class struggle of the proletariat for its interests and for a bigger role in the social life of the country is intensifying.

As the industrial revolution is being carried through, the social qualities of the proletariat are undergoing substantial changes. The share of handicraft workers and those who are half-workers and half-peasants, engaged in agriculture, is shrinking, while the share of regular workers who for generations have been associated with large-scale factory production is expanding. It is only at this stage that industrial proletarians outnumber the handicraft and manufactory workers and, accordingly, as class self-awareness is spreading, the negative attitude to factories gives way to the realisation of the need to fight against the capitalist system. But until then the proletariat has to traverse a long and hard path as it turns from a "class in itself" into a "class for itself", as Marx put it.

By the mid-19th century industrial proletarians had totalled about 9 million: 4.1 million in England, 2.5 million in France, 1.4 million in the USA, 900 thousand in Germany, and 700 thousand in Russia. Already at that stage of the development of capitalism the regular numerical growth of the proletariat was clearly manifest, because, according to Marx, "*increase of capital is increase of the proletariat, that is, of the working class.*"<sup>1</sup>

The emergence of the working class was a most important development in the history of mankind. The proletariat, that is, the working class is, in scientific terms, a class of people deprived of the means of production and living by selling their labour. By producing surplus value the proletariat enriches the capitalist and together with him the railway owner, the trader, and the banker. Depending on the situation at a definite time, on the alignment of class forces and on the level of its capacity for struggle, the workers receive bigger or smaller wages, have better or worse housing, can or cannot afford to buy cars, etc., but at all events they remain the same proletarians, slaves dependent on the capitalist exploiter so long as they are forced to sell their labour to the owner of the means of production, so long as they are given no chance to use the fruits of their labour at their own

discretion and to administer social production and the development of society as a whole.

As it grows and becomes organised and is increasingly aware that its interests are incompatible with those of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat rises to the struggle against the rule of the bourgeoisie and against bourgeois society as a whole, to free itself and the other working people from exploitation and bondage. The proletarian movement is "the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority",<sup>1</sup> because the proletariat cannot free itself unless it destroys the entire system of inequality and exploitation and, consequently, frees the broad masses of working people from arbitrary rule and oppression.

The proletariat is a consistently revolutionary class. All the classes before it, and all other classes sought to secure and fortify their mode of appropriation based on private property. Here is what the founders of Marxism say about the proletarians: "They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property."<sup>2</sup> The proletariat fights for a system in which social property in the means of production is established in the whole of society.

The proletariat is an international and internationalist class, because "the proletarians in all countries have one and the same interest, one and the same enemy, and one and the same struggle". Therefore, wrote Engels already in 1845, "Only the proletarians can destroy nationality, only the awakening proletariat can bring about fraternisation between the different nations."<sup>3</sup>

The triumph of capitalist social relations consolidated the despotic rule of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat. If a worker was refused a job, he had to live in hopeless misery; but if employed, he was severely exploited for a pittance. No wonder the struggle of wage labourers against capitalists, which raged, according to Marx, already in the manufactory period, was growing increasingly intensive.

At the beginning, the struggle took quite peculiar forms, due to the lack of class awareness among the masses. In the 1760s through the 1770s, the English workers, for instance, levelled their wrath at the machines and whole factories of their bosses. The movement of wreckers of manufacturing machinery (in England it was known as the Luddite move-

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1984, p. 495.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Frederick Engels, "The Festival of Nations in London", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 6.

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx, "Wage Labour and Capital", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 214.



ment named so after Ned Ludd, a worker who was the first to destroy a machine in retaliation to the employer's injustice) emerged also in France, Germany and other countries and at times assumed mass-scale proportions. The point is that at that time the working class saw its enemy not in the bourgeois who used the machine to exploit the worker, but in the machine itself. As a form of spontaneous protest against capitalist exploitation, the movement of machine wreckers was an early form of the class struggle waged by the yet immature proletariat. It takes time and experience for the worker to learn to act directly against capitalist exploitation.

Later, Luddite actions alternated with strikes. Spearheaded against the employer, against the exploiter, the strikes were becoming an increasingly popular and effective weapon in the class struggle of the proletariat.

The workers' early actions were spontaneous. At the time, the workers had neither a clear idea of the goals of the struggle nor organisations which could lead their struggle. They put forward only economic demands (a shorter working day, higher wages, better working and living conditions, and so on) and did not yet see the need to wage a political struggle against the socio-economic system, for a radical change of their position in society, for emancipation from capitalist oppression and exploitation. Besides, the workers' actions were limited to some or other factory or to a definite region. The working class was yet incapable of organising mass action in a whole industry, not to mention nation-wide action.

But these spontaneous and isolated economic actions against the employers proved most important for awakening the class awareness of the workers, widening the scope of their struggle, and promoting the organisation and efficiency of the working-class movement.

From its first actions, the successes and failures of the first strikes, the working class learned how to fight better. Among the first turning points in the history of the working-class struggle was the setting up of trade union organisations. The trade unions were, and still are, the largest workers' associations. They made the working class better organised and its struggle more effective.

The exploiter classes soon realised how really dangerous the trade unions were to them. Under the Combination Acts adopted in England as early as 1799, all workers' unions in the country were outlawed as "conspiratorial", even though the charges of their involvement in "plots" or "causing damage" to industry were never proved. But repression failed to damp down the workers' striving for unity. In the first quarter of the 19th century the first nation-wide associations of workers of different trades appeared in England.

In France, the bourgeoisie dealt a heavy blow at the workers soon as it came to power: in 1791 it adopted the Chapelier Law banning strikes. But that did not stop the working-class struggle in France. In 1795 Paris workers staged two large-scale uprisings to defend their rights. Both uprisings were suppressed, but they produced a deep impression on all progressives in the country.

#### *Critical Utopian Socialism*

Through practical experience the working class came to realise the injustice of the capitalist system. It rose against capital, instinctively at first. Almost simultaneously, educated people levelled rational criticism from socio-philosophical, humanistic positions at the limited nature and injustice of the capitalist system. Scientifically immature, the socialist ideas of that time reflected new social antagonisms, but were not associated with the practical struggle of the working class. Nonetheless, their significance was great enough to influence the struggle of the workers, facilitating the growth of their class instinct into class awareness.

Among the numerous non-scientific socialist theories of that time those of utopian socialists Robert Owen, Henri Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier were most significant for the class enlightenment of the workers. *Robert Owen* (1771-1858) hit out severely at capitalism. He condemned the exploitation of workers, capitalist competition and mass poverty and saw the source of all those evils in the private ownership of the means of production and in money causing the drive for profit. Owen dreamed of a society, in which there would be no private property, no classes, no poverty, and no difference between manual and mental work. He conceived the future classless society as a federation of self-governed communes in which material wealth should be distributed among its members according to their needs. But Owen could not, at that time, grasp the laws governing historical development and did not see the historical role of the working class. He did not understand that the bourgeoisie would never relinquish their power and economic positions voluntarily, that abolition of private property would inevitably be more painful than even a transition of ownership rights from one class (feudal lords) to another (capitalists). Owen rejected class struggle and believed that capitalism should be liquidated without a revolution, merely as a result of progress, enlightenment, the spread of proper morals and the triumph of common sense. He saw a way of achieving this in replacing money by special labour vouchers. Owen believed that trade unions could be transformed into producer cooperatives to admin-

ister corresponding industries. By such utopian methods Owen wanted to eliminate capitalism and build a communist society.

He was most active in the trade union movement and won a considerable influence in it. In 1834 the Grand National Consolidated Trades union was formed at his suggestion. But his utopian projects failed. The cooperative communes either fell apart or became capitalist businesses.

At that time, French utopian socialists Henri Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier, suggested their own ways of remaking society. Born to families that belonged to the propertied classes, they broke with those classes, censured capitalism and came up with a number of brilliant ideas on a future socialist society.

Writing about *Henri Saint-Simon* (1760-1825), Frederick Engels said that "what interests him first, and above all other things, is the lot of the class that is the most numerous and the most poor".<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon attacked the capitalist system and called for a socialist remaking of society which would then be able to meet the material and cultural requirements of all classes. He held that the economic basis of such society should be large-scale industry operating on scientific planning principles. All citizens in a socialist system, he believed, should work to the extent of their abilities for the benefit of society and receive remuneration in accordance with the amount of work done. The idea that a society in which each works according to his ability and is paid according to his work can exist was of immense revolutionary significance.

Saint-Simon's doctrine had weak points, too: it did not envisage the abolition of private property and failed to see the role of the working class in remaking society, regarding the proletariat merely as a "suffering class" incapable of building socialism. Therefore he appealed to the ruling classes to build a socialist society. Like Owen, Saint-Simon rejected revolutionary struggle and any violence. Persuasion is the only way to attain our goal, he said.

*Francois Marie Charles Fourier* (1772-1837) stressed in his criticism of the bourgeois system that in capitalist society the excess of wealth on one pole was possible due to poverty on the other, that capitalism maimed the individual. He believed that this unjust system should be replaced by a more fair one—socialism, a system on a higher level of social development. It was necessary, according to Fourier, to build a society meeting fully the requirements of man. It would be a

<sup>1</sup>"Additions to the Text of *Anti-Duhring* Made by Engels", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, 1986, p. 637.

society of the future, in which every man would have the right to work, while labour itself would become a necessity and an object of pleasure. The interests of the individual would coincide with the interests of all. Material wealth would be distributed mainly according to work and talent.

Like Owen and Saint-Simon, Fourier failed to understand the historical mission of the proletariat, and rejected revolution. He believed that to build a socialist society it was sufficient to propagate its ideas.

A special role in the history of the early working-class movement and in utopian socialist doctrines was played by Babouvism, the 18th-century movement in France, which took its name from its leader Gracchus Babeuf. It was an attempt by the nascent French proletariat to come up with its own action programme, an alternative to the ideology and policy of the bourgeoisie.

Gracchus Babeuf (1760-1797) and his followers set up a clandestine revolutionary organisation, the Secret Directorate of Public Salvation or Conspiracy of Equals, which was a culmination in the development of the Movement for Equality that had originated with the setting up in 1790 of the Social Circle to topple the counter-revolutionary government by a secretly organised uprising. A significant aspect in Babeuf's views was that he considered class struggle inevitable. He maintained that, as the French Revolution of 1789-1794 had brought no happiness to the people, it had to be carried on until the triumph of the "natural right", that is, the right of the people, the right of the poor against the rich, genuine equality, common property, and social production. Precisely Babeuf and his followers gave a "definite shape", as Engels put it, to the yet indistinct and vague social aspirations of the nascent French proletariat in the epoch of the beginning industrial revolution.

The conspirators were betrayed: Babeuf and Augustin-Alexandre Darthe, his closest associate, were executed, and other members of the Conspiracy of Equals were exiled or sentenced to various terms in prison. The Babouvist movement greatly promoted the development of socialist and communist ideas and the shaping of the class awareness of the proletariat. It "gave rise to the communist idea... This idea, consistently developed, is the *idea of the new world order*," wrote Marx.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrines of utopian socialists were immature in that they, according to the classics of Marxism, corresponded to immature capitalist production and immature class relations. Therefore they were doomed to remain utopias. Lenin wrote

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Holy Family", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1975, p. 119.



that "utopian socialism could not indicate the real solution. It could not explain the real nature of wage-slavery under capitalism, it could not reveal the laws of capitalist development, or show what *social force* is capable of becoming the creator of a new society."<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, the criticism of capitalist evils by utopian socialists, and the "embryos of brilliant ideas" about a new society provided an exceedingly valuable material for the education of workers. Therefore critical utopian socialism, for all its weaknesses, played an outstanding role in its time, paving the way for the ideas of scientific socialism.

#### *The First Independent Working-Class Actions*

The numbers of workers were growing, and they were increasingly concentrated at capitalist factories. Meanwhile, capitalist exploitation intensified causing ever greater resistance to it on the part of the working class, and a nation-wide economic organism was taking shape in various countries. Closer ties were established among the workers from the various areas of one or another country. All this greatly expanded the scope of the proletarian struggle and prepared the ground for making it a real class struggle, which is a major condition for the workers to become the working class.

In the 1830s through the 1840s, the working class for the first time emerged as an independent force in the arena of political struggles. This was evidenced by the insurrections of weavers at Lyons, France, in 1831 and 1834, by the Chartist movement in the 1830s and 1840s, and by the uprising of Silesian weavers in Germany in 1844. These spontaneous actions were gradually developing into independent political struggle.

The 1831 insurrection at Lyons was the first one to bring together thousands of workers in the struggle for their class interests, against the exploiters. The insurrection of weavers was joined by workers of other guilds, who demanded a better living. On November 21, 1831, the workers launched an armed struggle. On their banner they inscribed: "Live and work, or die in battle!". The insurgents seized power in the city.

But the insurrection did not exceed the city bounds. Not a single appeal was issued from Lyons to the peasants living near the city, who did not support the insurgents by action, though they sympathised with them. The insurgents had no definite social programme to offer. They were excellent

fighters, valiant and disciplined, driven by class hatred for the factory owners, but they were yet incapable of seeing, not to mention formulating, the goal of their struggle. After the seizure of power they were inactive and the enemy had the opportunity to gather troops, receive reinforcements from Paris and move towards insurgent Lyons. The defence of the city had not been organised and on December 8 it fell, offering almost no resistance.

Despite the defeat, the 1831 insurrection at Lyons evoked a wide response in France and outside it. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels thought it was highly significant. Marx noted that, objectively, the Lyons insurgents had been the "soldiers of socialism", though they had had a very vague idea of the significance and historical prospects of such actions.

In April 1834, the workers of Lyons rose up again. This time the uprising was caused by the government's preparation of new reactionary legislation threatening to abrogate the "right of associations", and ban all political organisations of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie. The uprising, sparked off by the trial of the men who had organised a strike in Lyons in February that year, was explicitly political and republican from the outset. Its weak point was that it had no links with the peasants and lacked a firm centralised leadership capable of rallying the popular masses together. Though the workers fought courageously, the uprising was defeated.

In the 1830s and 1840s, the working-class movement grew to the largest proportions in England. Chartism was the first nationwide political working-class movement there. It had originated among the radical-minded craftsmen of London. The organising centre of Chartism was the London Working Men's Association set up in 1836 by William Lovett, a joiner, Heteringron, a print-shop owner, and their friends.

In 1837, Lovett wrote a petition to parliament, demanding a radical parliamentary reform. It contained six points: 1. equal electoral districts; 2. cancellation of the property qualification; 3. universal suffrage for men; 4. an annually elected parliament; 5. secret ballot; 6. remuneration to the MPs. This programme, known as the People's Charter, became the official platform of the Chartist movement and united hundreds of thousands of workers. The workers believed that if the Charter's demands were met, this would enable them to win political power and emancipate them from oppression and exploitation.

The Chartist movement was diverse in social make-up, which gave rise to the emergence of several trends in it. But during the struggle, and especially after the Chartists were subjected to harsh reprisals, most of the petty-bourgeois elements departed from Chartism. The class struggle inten-

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, 1980, p. 27.

sified to a high degree, and on July 24, 1840, the setting up of the National Charter Association, the political party of the Chartists, was announced at a meeting of Chartist delegates in Manchester. The National Charter Association had the General Council and Executive Committee elected for a term of one year. All members of the party paid dues and had membership cards. The party comprised about 400 organisations and by 1842 its membership reached 40,000. It was the duty of the association members to implement the Charter.

The Chartist movement was purely proletarian. The Chartists exerted themselves to strengthen their ties with the trade unions and to win a greater influence there. Soon Chartist groups were springing up in the trade unions, and the Chartists set out to draw the trade unions in the political struggle. The proletarian class character of the movement was displayed in the new petition the Chartists put forward in 1842. This time it not only concerned the Charter itself but demanded an end to "monopolies", and to "privileges and oppression".

The petition was rejected, setting off a tide of long-fermenting popular wrath. In July and August 1842 the Chartist movement reached its peak and the workers of England came out to defend their rights. An unprecedentedly powerful general strike swept the country. In some instances workers seized enterprises, and even whole settlements and towns. The rank and file Chartists, by contrast with some of their leaders, vigorously participated in that proletarian action. But on the whole the movement had no due leadership: the trade unionists, who had got used to peaceful methods of struggle, were unable to lead the popular masses who demanded resolute action. Despite the heroic struggle of the workers, the government dealt harshly with the strikers. The defeat of the general strike and the rejection of the petition caused a decline in the Chartist movement, and after some upswing in 1848 it gradually came to naught.

Chartism was defeated primarily because the objective conditions for the class struggle were not ripe yet. Capitalism had by far not exhausted its potentialities for growth, while the bourgeoisie, deriving increasing profits from industrial development and the exploitation of workers, combined harsh reprisals against the workers with social manoeuvring, bribing the upper stratum of the working class by higher wages and other means.

The subjective factors, too, played a negative role. The proletariat at that time was just maturing as a class. The ideologically and organisationally weak proletariat clashed with the bourgeoisie gradually shedding its bourgeois and petty-bourgeois illusions. Chartism had no science-based

socialist programme, not all of its leaders were truly proletarian, and differences among them on tactical matters often reduced to naught the powerful upswing of the working people.

For all its weaknesses and setbacks, Chartism gave a powerful impetus to the working-class movement in both England and the world at large. Chartism was the first organised proletarian movement which raised the question of winning political power by the working class for its economic liberation. In other words, Chartism ushered in a new phase in the class struggle marked by the growing political independence of the proletariat. Besides, the Chartist movement acted as the vanguard of the working people in their struggle for democracy. And it was the Chartists who made the first attempt to set up an independent workers' party. According to Lenin, Chartism was the first broad, truly mass and politically organised proletarian revolutionary movement which "brilliantly anticipated much that was contained in the future Marxism."<sup>1</sup>

In Germany, the independent workers' movement got under way after the uprising of the Silesian weavers in 1844. Exploited by the buyers-up and by the local landlords to whom they paid a tax for producing cloth, the weavers languished under double oppression. To compete better with their English counterparts, the German capitalists began in the early 1840s sharply to cut back on prices when distributing yarn among weavers, thus dooming them and their families to hunger. The weavers in two large villages—Peterswaldau and Langenbilau, where some people starved to death—were hit the hardest. The song "Bloody Trial", which Marx called the "war-cry" of Silesian workers, was widely popular at the time. Driven to despair, the workers rose against the hated bosses. The uprising was quashed by troops.

The Silesian uprising speeded up the division of the German democrats into two camps: proletarian and petty-bourgeois. The petty-bourgeois democrats gave a sharply negative assessment of the Silesian uprising and maintained that the workers' struggle to defend their class interests weakened popular protest against absolutism. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels offered a different assessment. Marx noted that it was not merely a "revolt of the hungry", but an outstanding phenomenon, the start of the independent workers' movement in Germany. Spontaneous as it was, the Silesian uprising already displayed elements of consciousness and organisation (attempts to coordinate the insurgents' actions, joint

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Third International and Its Place in History", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, p. 309.



demands, etc.). And it gave rise to numerous workers' actions and strikes in Germany.

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Thus, the formation of the proletariat, greatly stimulated by the industrial revolution, led to the emergence of the working class in the political arena. In the 1830s through the 1840s, it launched a series of independent actions against the ruling class of the bourgeoisie. That was a radical turn in history, as Engels described it. "The class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie came to the front in the history of the most advanced countries in Europe, in proportion to the development, upon the one hand, of modern industry [*grosse Industrie*], upon the other, of the newly-acquired political supremacy of the bourgeoisie".<sup>1</sup>

The independent actions by the working class showed that it had begun to master political forms of struggle, and that there was an urgent need for vigorous independent action also in ideology, all the more so as considerable experience had already been gained in the economic struggle. But precisely in the ideological field, for all the difference in the initial forms and practical results of the workers' movement in England, France and Germany, the basic common feature was that the working-class movement was poorly equipped ideologically. It needed a scientifically grounded and truly revolutionary theory of proletarian struggle, which would correctly determine the position of the working class in capitalist society, the causes of its oppressed state and ways of liberating it from oppression and exploitation. And that theory had to be fused with the practice of the class struggle waged by the proletariat, with the working-class movement. But no such theory existed at the time.

The lessons of the early history of the working-class movement are significant in our time as well. First, social development already in those years made the working class the most progressive and growing revolutionary force. But at that time the working class had to go a long and difficult way from spontaneous and isolated actions to independent political struggle. Analysing the past experience, the Communists of today clearly see the weaknesses and difficulties of the working class as it made its first steps. In the modern highly developed world, too, the formation of the working class is still under way in the developing countries of Asia and Africa, while the working class in advanced and medium-developed

capitalist countries is being continuously replenished by members of other sections of society. Objectively, these processes can come up against the same difficulties and have the same weaknesses as those observed in the initial period of the working-class movement. But, drawing on historical experience and relying on the assistance of the international working class, the nascent proletariat or the fresh replenishment of the working class in various countries can avoid the long and painful transition from spontaneous action to an independent movement and see much sooner the need for organisation and the world historic mission of the working class and fight vigorously for its fulfilment. But, as practice has shown, this process is not always sufficiently rapid and effective.

Second, now as in the past, underdeveloped social relations, and the lack of class tempering among young recruits of the working-class and revolutionary movement may cause a revival of utopian views. This is borne out by theories of so-called "national socialism" appearing in some newly-free countries of Asia and Africa and all sorts of utopian, essentially petty-bourgeois, projects of remaking society advanced by the "new left". All these theories and projects, as a rule, misinterpret the leading, revolutionary and transforming role of the working class and in this sense they resemble the views of utopian socialists. But history has proved that the doctrines of utopian socialism are unfounded, limited and one-sided. To revive such theories today, when there exists the scientifically grounded and truly revolutionary ideology of Marxism-Leninism, would mean, objectively, to cause harm to the liberation movement. Today, the revolutionary forces can well avoid repeating mistakes of the past and theoretical delusions of the utopian socialists, for they have the knowledge of historical experience and the ideology of scientific communism to rely upon.

<sup>1</sup>Frederick Engels, "Anti-Duhring", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 26.

## Chapter Two

### The Rise of Scientific Communism and Communist Movement

The origin of the scientific world outlook of the working class is associated with the names of two great philosophers and revolutionaries—Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Frederick Engels (1820-1895)—who began their theoretical work and socio-political activities in the 1840s. It was not at once that their views became truly scientific and communist. At first their political convictions were revolutionary-democratic, and in philosophy they shared the views of the German idealist Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. "While retaining Hegel's idea of the eternal process of development, Marx and Engels rejected the preconceived idealist view",<sup>1</sup> and in the mid-1840s they assumed the position of dialectical materialism and scientific communism. Since then on, they were occupied with developing the fundamental principles of the doctrine which later became known as Marxism.

The origin of Marxism had been prepared by the ultimate establishment of the capitalist mode of production in Europe and North America, by the antagonistic contradictions in this mode of production, and by the emergence of a new revolutionary class—the proletariat—in the social arena. Marxism, according to Lenin, "emerged as the direct and immediate continuation of the teachings of the greatest representatives of philosophy, political economy and socialism",<sup>2</sup> to become a powerful ideological weapon of the working class in its struggle against capitalism and for building a new, humane and just society.

*The Historic Mission of the Working Class and the Inevitability of Transition from Capitalism to Socialism Are Proved Scientifically*

The greatest merit of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels is that, having analysed social development in every way, they turned socialism from a utopia into a science. The general ideas of scientific socialism were given an integral and con-

cise expression for the first time in their famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party* written in December 1847-January 1848 and published in February 1848. The great power of the *Communist Manifesto* is that it proved that a socialist revolution was inevitable, the revolution which would cause the collapse of capitalism, and that the proletariat had the historic mission of burying capitalism and building a socialist society.

Having analysed the laws governing the development of capitalist society, Marx and Engels arrived at the conclusion that the transition to socialism was inevitable. At a certain stage of human development the bourgeoisie played quite a progressive, even revolutionary role: it put an end to the predominance of feudal relations and created powerful productive forces and the world market. However, capitalism very soon revealed its inherent contradiction between the social character of production and the private form of the appropriation of what is produced, and also other antagonistic contradictions. As the productive forces were developing and production itself was becoming increasingly social in character, the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries could no longer be a motive force of social progress, while the capitalist relations acted as a brake on the advance of mankind. In order to ensure real progress of society, the basic contradictions of the capitalist system had to be overcome and private capitalist property abolished and replaced by social property in the means of production. This could be achieved only through a socialist revolution which put an end to the power of big capital and marked the start of socialist construction. The replacement of capitalism by socialism, Marx and Engels maintained, was a law-governed and inevitable outcome of the growth of capitalist contradictions.

Marx and Engels proved that the bourgeoisie not only created powerful productive forces, "not only has ... forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians".<sup>1</sup> In the *Communist Manifesto* the founders of Marxism expounded in detail the historic role of the proletariat as the most revolutionary class destined to wipe away the capitalist system and build a new society—socialism and communism.

By contrast with the utopian socialists and all kinds of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois reformists, Marx and Engels held that capitalism can be replaced by socialism only through a radical transformation of all political, economic, social

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Frederick Engels", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, 1977, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, 1980, p. 23.

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 490.



and cultural foundations of society—through a social revolution. They called this revolution proletarian (because the proletariat was destined to accomplish it) or socialist (because the building of socialism was its goal).

The cardinal issue of revolution, according to Marxism, is the question of political power. Bourgeois relations, stressed Marx and Engels, can be abolished only by overthrowing the bourgeoisie by force and making the proletariat the ruling class, having concentrated the basic means of production "in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class" (italics added.—Auth.)<sup>1</sup>

The subsequent course of history has borne out what *Manifesto of the Communist Party* says on the historic mission of the proletariat, the truly revolutionary class, which is to overthrow the capitalist system, accomplish a socialist revolution and build a society without exploitation and oppression. The working class, which at that time just set out as a social force, is now in the centre of world development. All kinds of anti-Marxist theories currently in vogue allege that the working class has ceased to be revolutionary and is going bourgeois, that it does not accept revolutionary consciousness and even is disappearing as a class. But the fact is that the working class is growing stronger and better organised, that it is a leading revolutionary force which is consolidating its positions in the world.

In the mid-19th century there were less than 10 million proletarians in the world, whereas in the last quarter of the 20th century the number of workers has approached the 700-million mark. The working class is now better organised than ever before; it has revolutionary political parties and large trade unions. Its ideological, cultural and intellectual level is rising with every passing year, and it has an ever bigger role to play as the chief productive and socio-political force in the world.

The biggest revolutionary gain of the working class was the creation of the socialist world system. As it guides the building of socialist and communist society, the working class in the socialist countries acts as the major revolutionary force, the mainstay of the world anti-imperialist movement, a bastion of peace and the security of the peoples. The might of the working class, embodied in existing socialism, is the main factor steadily changing the balance of strength in the world in favour of the international working class, to the detriment of imperialism.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 504. The words in italics express the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, though the term itself was not yet used. It was introduced by Karl Marx in 1850 in *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*.

In the industrialised capitalist countries, over 200 million workers carry on a stubborn struggle against capitalist exploitation, for democracy and social progress. Despite all the changes in the structure of the working class in these countries (of occupational, sectoral, educational, etc. nature), it is still exploited and oppressed, and fights vigorously for its rights and interests, against the policy pursued by big business, against the entire system of state-monopoly capitalism.

In the developing countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa, the working class is growing in number and is gaining strength. It is a major force in the struggle against imperialism there, for deep-going democratic reforms, for national liberation and revival, for social progress.

*Marx and Engels Organise a Revolutionary  
Party of the Proletariat*

Bourgeois ideologists, together with reformists and opportunists, mount fierce attacks on the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the party. They allege, for instance, that the doctrine on the party and its role is not Marxism, but almost a deviation from it. They also maintain that this doctrine is the "product of the Bolsheviks" who exaggerated the subjective factor, underrating, or totally ignoring the conditions of objective development.

These assertions are all wrong. But it must be stressed here that the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the party had been elaborated precisely by Marx and Engels. They suggested the idea of setting up a genuinely revolutionary organisation of the proletariat—the communist party, without which the working class is unable to fulfil its historic mission. "For the proletariat to be strong enough to win on the decisive day it must ... form a separate party distinct from all others and opposed to them, a conscious class party," wrote Engels.<sup>1</sup>

In *Manifesto of the Communist Party* Marx and Engels wrote that the communist party should be the most advanced and resolute section of the working class which always pushes it forward. The Communists are the finest representatives of the working class. They have a vast knowledge of theory and understand well the conditions, the course and general results of social development. Their theoretical views and principles are not something far-fetched and impracticable, but are an expression of the relations of class struggle as they really are.

<sup>1</sup>"Engels to Gerson Trier in Copenhagen; London, December 18, 1889", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 386.

As the workers' vanguard, the communist party does not oppose itself to other organisations of the working class. It differs from them mainly in that it speaks for the interests of the proletariat as a whole, at every stage of its development, and not for the interests of a separate group of workers. In the struggle conducted by workers in various countries the Communists defend the common interests of the whole class, irrespective of nationality. In other words, the Communists are an international force, reflecting what is common in the social position of the world proletariat and indicating the common enemy and the common goals of the working class in all countries.

Marx and Engels formulated a number of fundamental principles underlying the policy of communist parties. The most important of them is: "The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."<sup>1</sup> (That is, the long-term objectives and tasks of struggle.) As they plan their policy, the Communists proceed from the analysis of a specific historical situation, the objective content of the coming revolution, and the alignment of forces in the given country. At the same time they "everywhere support every revolutionary movement" against the social and political exploiter system.<sup>2</sup> Naturally they take into consideration that these movements are often inconsistent and limited in class terms.

Marx and Engels saw a major task of the communist party in combining revolutionary theory and the working-class mass movement. Only in this way can the working class understand its historical mission and be a conscious motive force in a revolution and in building a new society.

Marx and Engels did not confine themselves to elaborating the doctrine on the communist party and set out to create such a party. To that end they deemed it necessary to propagate their views among revolutionaries in various countries. Already in the spring of 1846 they organised in Brussels and other European cities committees of communist correspondents who helped disseminate the ideas of scientific communism. That was a necessary stage in the work to create a proletarian party.

Another major aspect of that work was the criticism of all sorts of unscientific and pseudo-socialist theories which were current in the European working-class movement. Marx and

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6., p. 518.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 519.

Engels castigated the erroneous views of Wilhelm Weitling<sup>1</sup>, who saw revolution as a spontaneous outbreak and in fact was against setting up a revolutionary party. Addressing a revolutionary appeal to the poor and oppressed in general, and not to a definite class, Weitling mistakenly believed that the most revolutionary force was the lumpen-proletariat, that is, the declassé sections of society. At a certain stage of history Weitling's works were justified as being "the first independent theoretical stirring of the German proletariat".<sup>2</sup> But when scientific socialism emerged on the scene, his views were misleading the workers, distracting them from the correct path of struggle.

At the same time Marx and Engels levelled their criticism at so-called "genuine socialism", a version of petty-bourgeois socialism.<sup>3</sup> The advocates of "genuine socialism" idealised precapitalist society and from that position they attacked capitalism, preaching universal love and brotherhood instead of class struggle.

The theoretical and political activity of Marx and Engels, and their combating unscientific petty-bourgeois theories set the stage for the formation in 1847 of the first international proletarian communist organisation—the Communist League—on the basis of the League of the Just.<sup>4</sup> Influenced by Marx and Engels, the Communist League opted for the principles of scientific socialism as the basis of its political activity and organisation.

It adopted the Rules at its first congress held in June 1847 in London. The first article, formulated by Engels, said: "The League aims at the emancipation of humanity by spreading the theory of the community of property and its speediest possible practical introduction."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Wilhelm Weitling (1808-1871) was an outstanding figure in the early working-class movement in Germany, a theoretician of utopian working-class communism and a spokesman of the craftsmen who were turning proletarian. In the 1850s he departed from the working-class movement.

<sup>2</sup>Frederick Engels, "On the History of the Communist League", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Three, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup>Petty-bourgeois socialism was an unscientific doctrine. Its various trends criticised contradictions of the capitalist system. The proponents of petty-bourgeois socialism demanded that the exploitation of small owners by big business be ended by means of partial reforms, not affecting the foundations of the capitalist system. They wanted to perpetuate private property and small-scale commodity production, ignoring the fact that both inevitably give rise to exploitation.

<sup>4</sup>The League of the Just (Bund der Gerechten) was a secret organisation of German political emigres (craftsmen and workers) set up in 1836-37. In the 1840s it became an international organisation. Its leaders were influenced by utopian views.

<sup>5</sup>"Rules of the Communist League", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 585.



The League accepted democratic centralism as the chief principle underlying its organisation and functioning. The League members joined primary organisations united in circuits with circuit committees at the head. The supreme organ of the League was the Congress; and between congresses, the Central Committee. Though the League operated secretly (otherwise it could not have existed in those conditions), it was a democratic organisation with regularly elected leading bodies. Democracy was combined with necessary centralisation: lower bodies were subordinate to the higher ones.

Thus Marxism discovered the main organisational principle of a genuinely revolutionary party. This combination of democracy and centralisation made the communist organisation of the proletariat united and efficient, and opened up ample opportunities for the initiative of its every member, who was an equal among equals. Marxist-Leninists have been invariably adhering to democratic centralism as the guiding principle of the organisation and activities of a party ever since. This helps the Marxist-Leninist parties to function as militant and democratic organisations fighting for the interests of the working people and winning big victories. This precisely is what makes the enemies of the Communists come out against democratic centralism in a bid to discredit this principle and to prod the revolutionaries to give it up.

The First Congress of the Communist League discarded the non-class motto of the League of the Just, "All men are brethren", and adopted the proletarian class slogan, suggested by Marx and Engels, "Working men of all countries, unite!", which was an expression of the main principle of proletarian internationalism—the idea of working-class unity for joint struggle against capital.

*Manifesto of the Communist Party* became the programme of the Communist League. Its theoretical and political leadership was exercised by Marx and Engels.

*The Strategy and Tactics of the Communists in the 1848-1849 Bourgeois Revolution in Germany*

The bourgeois-democratic revolutions in several European countries were the first test for the new doctrine and for the policy of the Communist League which had adopted that doctrine. On the other hand, these revolutions enriched the Marxist doctrine, strategy and tactics.

The working class played a major role in the French bourgeois-democratic revolution which started in February 1848. The workers of Paris rose in arms against the bourgeoisie in June 1848, but ultimately they lost. Revolutionary ac-

tions were launched in Germany, Italy, and the Austrian empire. During the revolutions Marx and Engels primarily concentrated on elaborating theoretical and practical guidelines for the German revolutionaries.

When the revolution began in France, the German revolutionaries, who emigrated to Paris, considered the ways and means of boosting the revolution which was about to erupt in Germany, and the tactics to be employed in those conditions. The idea of forming an armed legion to be sent to Germany and enkindle a revolution there was most popular. That was a version of an "export of revolution". Marx and Engels were strongly opposed to that "game of revolution": "To carry an invasion, which was to import the revolution forcibly from outside, into the midst of the ferment then going on in Germany, meant to undermine the revolution in Germany itself, to strengthen the governments and to deliver the legions ... defenceless into the hands of the German troops."<sup>1</sup> Marx and Engels were persuading the German workers in France not to join the legion but to go back home separately, and start an active struggle there. In this way from 300 to 400 workers, mostly Communist League members, were sent home to join the revolutionary actions in Germany.<sup>2</sup>

The bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany, which started in March 1848,<sup>3</sup> was to put an end to feudal and absolutist oppression and to unite the country, which was fragmented politically and economically, into one national state. In that situation Marx and Engels were instructed by the Central Committee of the Communist League to formulate the *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*, the political platform of the Communists in a bourgeois-democratic revolution. The document was drawn up on the basis of a strictly scientific analysis of the political situation, the alignment of class forces, and the content of the revolution. The chief demand was to establish in Germany a united democratic republic. This would help to complete the shaping of the German nation and provide the basis for pooling the

<sup>1</sup>Frederick Engels, "On the History of the Communist League", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Three, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup>Later, too, Marx and Engels, and then Lenin and all true Marxists, were opposed to all kinds of the "export of revolution" theory, for, according to Lenin, "Such a 'theory' would be completely at variance with Marxism, for Marxism has always been opposed to 'pushing' revolutions, which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions." (V.I. Lenin, "Strange and Monstrous", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, 1977, pp. 71-72.)

<sup>3</sup>Germany, or the German Union, consisted at that time of 34 independent feudal-absolutist states and four free cities. Austria and Prussia were the largest among the German states.

efforts of the working class nationwide. The work to unite Germany was closely associated with the struggle for the democratisation of the entire political system. To that end, the following demands were put forward: universal suffrage for citizens not younger than 21 years; salaries to members of parliament "so that workers, too, shall be able to become members of the German parliament"; the arming of the German people instead of having a regular army; legal proceedings free of charge; and complete separation of the church from the state.

The central task in agrarian relations was to abolish landed estates and feudal services. Therefore it was demanded that feudal estates be handed down to the state; corvée, quit rent and other feudal services be abolished; farming be conducted on the nationalised land on a large scale by contemporary scientific methods for the benefit of the whole of society; and the possibilities be limited for the capitalist exploitation of peasants—the petty owners and leaseholders.

The *Demands* envisaged also a series of other progressive and democratic measures: replacement of all private banks by a state bank; nationalisation of railways, steamers, and the post service; curtailment of the right of inheritance; introduction of steeply graduated taxes and cancellation of taxes on consumer goods; provision of jobs by the state to all workers; care for the disabled; and introduction of general and free public education.<sup>1</sup>

All this shows that the Communists demanded anti-feudal, general democratic reforms. This was a bold and practicable programme, without attempts to put the cart before the horse or to skip some stages of revolution. Should the measures offered in the *Demands* be effected through the joint efforts of the working class, the urban bourgeoisie and the peasants, that, in the opinion of Marx and Engels, would have been a major phase in the struggle for the complete emancipation of the proletariat, for the abolition of private capitalist property, and for the victory of the proletarian revolution. The *Demands* were, in fact, the first general democratic programme in the history of the working-class movement, reflecting the main theoretical and strategic principle of Marxism, which says that the struggle for democracy should be combined with the efforts to achieve the key social objectives of the working-class movement. They also show that the Communists emerged from the outset as the most democratic force, as the most consistent fighters for democracy,

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Demands of the Communist Party in Germany", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, 1977, pp. 3-7.

for the genuine national interests of their country. Since then on, general democratic tasks have been part and parcel of the communist parties' platforms. As they work to fulfil these tasks, the Communists follow the trail blazed by the founders of Marxism-Leninism and always associate it with the struggle for socialism.

When the revolution started in Germany, Marx and Engels arrived there in early April 1848 to take part in the revolutionary struggle. They tried to set up a mass political organisation of German workers on the basis of the communities of the Communist League, but failed. The political backwardness of the German proletariat, a result of the general political and economic backwardness of Germany, made it impossible to turn the Communist League into a mass political party of the working class. In that situation the leaders and rank and file members of the Communist League concentrated on working in the legally operating mass organisations and the democratic press. As they sought to further the bourgeois-democratic revolution, Marx, Engels and their supporters set to rallying all the democratic political forces and broad sections of the population in Germany around the left wing of the democratic movement.

From May 1848 to May 1849 Marx and Engels were preoccupied with publishing the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. The editor-in-chief of the newspaper was Karl Marx. It was issued in Cologne as a paper of the democratic forces, but in actual fact it was an organ of the Communist League. The League itself was during that year mainly an ideological and political trend and the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was its chief spokesman. As it came out against the overtly reactionary forces, against absolutism and feudalism, the paper simultaneously attacked the big bourgeoisie which very soon "concluded a defensive and offensive alliance with the reactionary forces, because it was afraid of the people".<sup>1</sup>

Through the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* Marx and Engels urged the popular masses to establish a truly revolutionary power, a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the people capable of abolishing the feudal-absolutist system, ending with monarchy and the landlords, and ensuring the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

In the newspaper Marx and his followers demanded a radical solution to the agrarian problem and insisted on effecting the measures envisaged in the *Demands*. At the same time, meeting the interests of the broad sections of the peasantry, the paper extended the agrarian programme

<sup>1</sup>Frederick Engels, "The Berlin Debate on the Revolution", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 74.



by demanding that large estates be divided among landless and land-hungry peasants. This started the elaboration of the tactics of building the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry in a bourgeois-democratic revolution.

The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was the ideological, political and organisational centre of the revolutionary struggle, a revolutionary headquarters of a kind. Its editorial board in fact acted as the Central Committee of the Communist League. Through the newspaper Marx and Engels sought to secure the ideological and political unity of the Communists and to teach them to respond quickly and effectively to all important events in Germany. The most popular means of the political education of workers and their vanguard, the paper prepared the ground for shaping in future a mass party of German workers.

As long as it existed, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* consistently adhered to internationalist positions, supporting the revolutionary and liberation struggle in other countries, advocating militant solidarity among the revolutionaries of all nations. It stressed the revolutionary significance of the Polish democratic movement, expressed profound sympathy for the Czech uprising in Prague in mid-June 1848, stressed the historic role of the June uprising of Paris workers, backed the popular insurrection in Vienna, voiced support for the revolutionary movements in Hungary and Italy, and exposed the activity of all kinds of European reactionaries—from Russian tsarism to Prussian and Austrian absolutism.

This was the Communists' first experience of operating through the press. In that sense it is safe to say the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was the first revolutionary proletarian newspaper. This experience showed that the newspaper was to the Communists, as Lenin noted later, a collective propagandist and organiser. Drawing on the experience Marx, Engels and their followers gained when they worked for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Marxists have always sought, and still do, to make the most of the press and other mass media in the interest of the workers.

An important aspect in the Communists' activities at that time was their participation in the work of the democratic and workers' organisations which had cropped up in greater part of Germany. Marx and his associates joined the Democratic Society, a mass organisation set up in April 1848 in Cologne. The Communists who operated in other German cities joined local democratic organisations which normally included members of the petty bourgeoisie, of some sections of the bourgeoisie, and workers. Participation in democratic associations gave Communists an opportunity to influence the working masses and to cooperate with petty-bourgeois democrats.

The Cologne Workers' Union was headed by Marx from mid-October 1848 to February 1849, who did much to promote the ideological and political education of the workers. Since then all genuine Marxists have attached great significance to working in mass workers' and democratic organisations, adding to the militancy of their members and enhancing their political awareness.

From the start of the revolution in Germany Marx and his supporters were faced with two dangerous petty-bourgeois ideological and political trends in the workers' movement. The spokesman of one of them, Andreas Gottschalk, was against the workers' taking part in the general democratic movement and urged the workers to boycott elections to the National Assembly. He advocated a venturesome idea that a "workers' republic" be established immediately, though there were no conditions for such an action. Should the Communists pursue the political line suggested by Gottschalk, they would have found themselves isolated from the masses, and the mass movement would have been weakened.

The other petty-bourgeois trend was headed by Stephan Born who had founded the Workers' Brotherhood in Berlin, which, according to Engels, stood aloof from the great political movement of the proletariat and to a large extent existed only on paper<sup>1</sup>. Opposed to independent political actions by the proletariat, Born focused the attention of workers and craftsmen only on their daily economic needs. He distracted them from the general political tasks that faced the German people and insisted on minor reforms, on organising mutual assistance, workers' cooperatives, and so on. In Germany, Born assured, the factory owners were extending "a friendly hand for concord" to the workers.

These and other petty-bourgeois trends in the German working-class movement did not crop up by chance. They had been caused by the heterogeneity and diversity of the working class which had been joined by ruined petty-bourgeois elements. Both petty-bourgeois mentality and ideology enter the working-class movement from outside: in any capitalist country the working class is surrounded by numerous sections of small proprietors. The bourgeoisie, for its part, tends to split the working class using various means to that end (bribing some of the workers, influencing them politically and ideologically, and so on). As a result, the possibility for the emergence of erroneous trends has always existed in capitalist society.

<sup>1</sup>See Frederick Engels, "On the History of the Communist League", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Three, p. 186.

Today, as in the past, the Communists are for the unity of the working class, for its alliance with urban and rural middle strata to fight effectively against big business. They favour the expansion of the social basis of the class and anti-imperialist struggle by involving ever new sections of the population in it. But, as in the days of Marx, they resolutely oppose both left-adventuristic and right-reformist views of the petty-bourgeoisie and the backward sections of the working class, because such views distract the workers from the real class struggle against the bourgeoisie and imperialism, and so doom this struggle to defeat.

In the autumn of 1848 the reactionaries in Germany struck back at the revolutionary forces. The German bourgeoisie gave up all opposition to the feudal-absolutist system and went over entirely to counter-revolutionary positions. The petty bourgeoisie vacillated more than ever, revealing its helplessness, indecision and inconsistency. At the same time, the political awareness of the proletariat increased, and so did its striving for independence and unity (which was facilitated, no doubt, by the activities of Marx, Engels and their supporters). New economic and political unions of workers were springing up in various parts of Germany. At their congresses, held in winter and spring 1849, the unions adopted resolutions on convening a national workers' congress to found an all-Germany workers' union which would set itself both social and political goals.

Considering these new tendencies in the working-class movement, Marx and Engels spoke in April 1849 in favour of founding a national workers' organisation, which they hoped to turn into a mass political party of the German proletariat. To help achieve the ideological, political and organisational independence of workers, Marx and his followers took an important decision on April 14, 1849 to break with the petty-bourgeois democrats and set up an independent proletarian organisation.

However, the victory of counter-revolution, expulsion of Marx and his associates from Germany, the banning of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, and abolition of freedom of the press and speech and of the right to form associations made it impossible at that time to found an independent political party of the German working class.

But the decision to set up such an organisation meant a great deal—the first ever attempt was made to organise on the national level a mass political party of the German working class which would be guided by the doctrine of scientific communism. Two decades later such a party emerged in Germany, and some time later in other capitalist countries. In our day, the revolutionary parties of the working class—

Marxist-Leninist parties—operate in almost 100 countries. And new such parties are taking shape.

*Lessons of the 1848-1849 Revolution Summed Up*  
by Marx and Engels. *The Communist League After the Revolution*

After the defeat of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany Marx and Engels drew a number of important conclusions for the theory, strategy and tactics of the class struggle of the proletariat. Some of the conclusions were set forth in the *Address of the Central Authority to the League*, written in March 1850.

The *Address* emphasised that the chief task facing the Communists was to set up an independent workers' party which "must act in the most organised, most unanimous and most independent fashion possible".<sup>1</sup> The proletariat and its party, the *Address* said, must separate from the petty-bourgeois democrats both ideologically and organisationally. The demand to set up an independent "organisation of the workers' party ... and make each community the central point and nucleus of workers' associations in which the attitude and interests of the proletariat will be discussed independently of bourgeois influences"<sup>2</sup> was most important in this context.

The *Address* offered specific recommendations on measures to be taken to win and consolidate the independence of the proletariat. As they advocated the workers' independent participation in the elections to central and local representative establishments, Marx and Engels demanded that the workers should nominate their own candidates wherever possible from among the Communist League members and get them elected. The *Address* said they should nominate their own candidates even when there was no hope for these candidates to be elected, just to show everybody their revolutionary position and their party point of view.

The ideological, political and organisational division between the proletariat and the petty-bourgeois democrats did not mean that the proletariat would not enter into agreements and blocs with them. On the contrary, the *Address* said such agreements and blocs were necessary in the struggle against the common enemy. But, concluding such agreements, the proletarian party should always remain independent organisationally and pursue an independent revolutionary policy.

In the *Address* Marx and Engels for the first time formulated the concept of permanent revolution, i.e., that in certain

<sup>1</sup>"Address of the Central Authority to the League", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, 1978, p. 278.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 282.



conditions a lengthy period of "tranquil", non-revolutionary development between the bourgeois-democratic and proletarian revolutions was not absolutely necessary. Moreover, the revolutionary process can be continuous and a bourgeois-democratic revolution can grow into a socialist one. Marx and Engels pointed out that "it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, the proletariat has conquered state power."<sup>1</sup> The main conditions for such a development of revolution is that the proletariat should be independent in the revolutionary struggle and that the revolutionary energy of the masses should constantly grow.

The authors of the *Address* based their conclusions on the situation prevailing in Germany in the mid-19th century and, naturally, a number of their tactical recommendations were drawn up accordingly. But the main principles concerning the independence of the proletariat and its political party, alliance with petty-bourgeois democrats in the struggle against the common enemy, the continuity of the revolutionary process, and the growing of a bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist one were elaborated on in the subsequent decades and are just as valid for the revolutionary movement today.

Other conclusions based on the analysis of the 1848-1850 events were expounded by Marx in *The Class Struggles in France. 1848 to 1850* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and by Engels in *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, and other works. These conclusions greatly enriched social scientific thought.

Marx and Engels focused most of their attention on the duration and complexity of the imminent revolution. Marx spoke of the duration and the phases of a revolutionary transition to communist society already in the winter of 1849-1850, when he delivered a series of lectures on *Manifesto of the Communist Party* at the London German Workers' Communist Education Association. Later, Marx stressed in *The Class Struggles in France* that the proletarian revolution would not be short-lived. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Marx explained the duration and complexity of the future revolutionary process by the basic difference between the proletarian and bourgeois revolutions, and by the novelty of tasks the former was to accomplish. Hence its deep-going nature and inherent self-criticism.

As he elaborated on the theory of the socialist revolution, Marx arrived at the conclusion (in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*) that the proletariat cannot just take over the old bourgeois state machinery and then use it for establishing its rule and building socialism. To fulfil its historic mission the proletariat must smash the bourgeois military-bureaucratic machine and create a new, proletarian state instead. This conclusion is the basic element in the Marxist doctrine on the state, as Lenin stressed later.

Setting forth the essence of power to be established after the overthrow of capitalist domination, Marx for the first time used the term "dictatorship of the proletariat".<sup>1</sup> The conclusion that the dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary and inevitable during the transition from capitalism to socialism is one of the basic propositions of Marxism. "What I did that was new was to demonstrate: 1) that the *existence of classes* is merely linked to *particular historical phases in the development of production*, 2) that class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*,"<sup>2</sup> Marx wrote in March 1852.

The conclusion that the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential to the proletariat during the transition to socialism was the greatest revelation for the revolutionary movement of the working class. The revolutionary practices of the past and present have shown beyond any doubt that the dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary for transition from capitalism to socialism. This is why the Communists so firmly adhere to this major tenet of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The dictatorship of the proletariat may take different forms, of course, especially in our time, when revolutionary processes are so diverse, but essentially it is always the same: political domination of the working class in alliance with the rest of the working people, and its leadership in the construction of a new, socialist society.

In 1850 Marx and Engels formulated an idea of historic significance—that it is possible to start a revolutionary remaking of society and go over to new society not in more developed countries, but in the "periphery" of the capitalist social system: "Violent outbreaks must naturally occur rather in the extremities of the bourgeois body than in its heart, since the

<sup>1</sup>"Address of the Central Authority to the League", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, 1978, p. 281.

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx, "The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup>"Marx to Joseph Weydemeyer in New York; London, March 5, 1852", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 64.

possibility of adjustment is greater here than there."<sup>1</sup> The revolutionary developments of the 20th century have borne out Marx' prevision.

The course and outcome of revolutions led Marx to the conclusion that the interests of the peasants are in irreconcilable conflict with capital, and that "Only the fall of capital can raise the peasant; only an anti-capitalist, a proletarian government can break his economic misery, his social degradation."<sup>2</sup> "Hence the peasants find their natural ally and leader in the *urban proletariat*, whose task is the overthrow of the bourgeois order."<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Marx stressed that without support from the peasantry the proletarian revolution could not win in countries with a large peasant population. By winning over the peasantry, Marx wrote, "*the proletarian revolution will obtain that chorus without which its solo becomes a swan song in all peasant countries*".<sup>4</sup> This is yet another major proposition on the revolutionary theory and tactics of the workers' movement, and its correctness was proved in the course of the socialist revolutions in Russia and in other countries that opted for socialism. As we all know, in the latter half of the 20th century the social pattern changed considerably in industrialised capitalist countries, where the peasantry has been largely eroded by state-monopoly capitalism and by the revolution in science and technology, and constitutes merely a fraction of the economically active population: from 1 to 13 per cent in various countries. But on the whole, Marx's idea about the proletariat's alliance with the peasants and with other non-proletarian sections of the working people in town and country has lost none of its relevance for the communist movement. As regards the developing countries, where the peasants still make up a considerable part of the population, the working class cannot win there unless it allies itself with them. This has been borne out by the entire history of the working-class and communist movement.

Engels analysed the conditions required for an armed uprising to be effective. He said that one should never play with an insurrection, if one is not determined to go all the way to the end: "The insurrectionary career once entered upon, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Review, May to October [1850]", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 509.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Marx, "The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup>Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, 1979, p. 191.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>5</sup>Frederick Engels, "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 86.

This phrase epitomises the fundamental experience of the revolutionary battles fought by the working people. The knowledge of this experience enabled the Russian Communists to accomplish the October 1917 Revolution; helped the Cuban revolutionaries to carry through the victorious rising in 1959; and has led to revolutionary victories in other countries. Today, this Marxist conclusion serves as a guideline for the revolutionaries whenever they have to wage an armed struggle. These and other conclusions and generalisations made by Marx and Engels as they analysed the experience of the 1848-1849 revolutions became part and parcel of the doctrine of scientific communism.

In the summer of 1850, Marx and Engels saw that the revolutionary movement was on the wane and no revolutions were forthcoming in the near future. The new assessment of the situation made it obvious to them that the Communist League was to change tactics. Now the task was to preserve and increase the number of proletarians capable of waging new battles and to educate them theoretically.

This tactical move was opposed by August Willich, Karl Schapper<sup>1</sup>, and their supporters. They pushed the Communist League onto the adventurist path and insisted that a new revolution should be started immediately in Germany. "The materialist standpoint of the *Manifesto* has given way to idealism. The revolution is seen not as the product of realities of the situation but as the result of an effort of *will*. Whereas we say to the workers: You have 15, 20, 50 years of civil war to go through in order to alter the situation and to train yourselves for the exercise of power, it is said: 'We must take power *at once*, or else we may as well take to our beds',"<sup>2</sup> said Marx arguing with those in the League who supported Willich and Schapper. Willich and Schapper found themselves in the minority and set out to split the League. Expelled from the Communist League, the Willich-Schapper group gradually degenerated into a small sect isolated from

<sup>1</sup>August Willich (1810-1878), a Communist League member since 1847. He served as an officer in the Prussian army and retired for political reasons. He took part in an uprising in Germany in 1849, and in 1853 he emigrated to the United States where he fought in the Civil War (1861-1865) on the side of the Northerners. Karl Schapper (1812-1870), an outstanding figure in the German and international working-class movement, a leader of the League of the Just and a Central Authority member of the Communist League. He took part in the 1848-1849 revolution in Germany; headed, together with Willich, a sectarian and adventurist faction in the Communist League. Later, however, he realised he had been mistaken and since 1856 he worked close with Marx. He was a General Council member of the First International.

<sup>2</sup>"Meeting of the Central Authority, September 15, 1850", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 626.



the proletarian movement, and joined emigres in their venturesome acts.

The fate of that group proved beyond any doubt (it was one of the first instances of this kind in the history of the communist movement) that it was most important for the revolutionaries to stay firmly on the real ground of class struggle, and not to indulge in wishful thinking or be misled by fantastic illusions, which inevitably leads, one way or another, to separation from the popular masses, venturesome actions, and defeat.

Apart from the attacks "from within", the Communist League came under fire from the direct class enemies of the proletariat—the ruling classes—in a number of European countries. The German reactionaries acted as the shock force. In 1852, the Prussian authorities staged a trial of a group of Communist League members in Cologne, who had been arrested in May and June 1851. At that anti-communist trial, the first of its kind in history, Prussian reactionaries brought unfounded charges against the defendants, accusing them of complicity in a plot against the state.

To prove the accusations the reactionaries had been fabricating evidence and false charges and planting spies and provocateurs in the Communist League for about 18 months. Though the charges were obviously unfounded, some of the defendants were nonetheless sentenced to various terms in prison.

Marx revealed the class character of the anti-communist trial in Cologne. He wrote: "The defendants, who represented the revolutionary proletariat, stood defenceless before the ruling classes who were represented by the jury."<sup>1</sup> The policy of anti-communism, so clearly seen in the Cologne trial, was used by the reactionary circles of the exploiter classes against the working-class and democratic movement, against the revolutionary science-based doctrine in which the reactionaries sensed a mighty power and which they tried to discredit and destroy.

The reactionary bourgeoisie has been using the ideology and policy of anti-communism on a growing scale ever since. In our time, anti-communism is the chief ideological weapon used by the outgoing world against the revolutionary and liberation movements.

Before and during the Cologne trial the reactionaries accused Marxists of putschism, plotting, and venturesome activities, that is, of views and policies alien to them. The Willich-Schapper group, whose adventurism and unscrupulousness

gave cause for slander against the Communist League, thereby jeopardising the truly revolutionary trend in the working-class movement, objectively acted as an accomplice of the reactionaries. Already at that time the policy of anti-communism was an international phenomenon: while preparing the Cologne trial, the Prussian police made extensive use of the services of the French police, and together they fabricated the case of "German-French conspiracy".

Marx and Engels did a good job to expose the tricks employed by the reactionaries who staged the anti-communist trial. The pamphlet *Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne*, which Marx wrote from October to December 1852, laid bare the class nature of the trial and exposed the fabrications used by the reactionaries to slander the Communist League, its policy and theoretical views, and to discredit its leaders. During the trial Marx provided the defendants' lawyers with necessary facts and documents, enabling them to drive those who had staged the frame-up trial into corner.

During the Cologne trial Marx came out firmly against the ideology and policy of anti-communism, and he carried on that struggle all his life. The traditions of this struggle were later taken up by Lenin and then by the present-day communist movement. The 1969 Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties exposed anti-communism as a weapon in the hands of imperialists against the world revolutionary movement. Through anti-communism they try to "split the ranks of the revolutionaries in these (developing.—Auth.) countries and isolate them from their best friends—the socialist states and the revolutionary working-class movement in the capitalist countries".<sup>1</sup>

Soon after the Cologne trial Marx and Engels saw that the Communist League had exhausted its potentialities, and its further functioning was not advisable. On November 17, 1852, it was decided to disband the League.

The Communist League was the first ever form of an international proletarian party operating on principles of scientific communism. It came into being at an early stage of the workers' emancipation movement, which at that time was ideologically immature and organisationally weak. This explains why its membership did not exceed 400, and why it could not become a nucleus of a larger, more united and influential proletarian organisation.

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<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx, "Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 457.

<sup>1</sup>International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969, Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague, 1969, p. 13.

So, the activities of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the 1840s culminated in creating the foundations of the theory of scientific socialism (communism), an integral world outlook of the revolutionary proletariat based on the cognition of the laws governing social development. The founders of Marxism formulated the main propositions of the theory of revolution, the strategy and tactics of the communist party in revolutionary struggles.

All this meant that the international working-class movement rose to a new and higher level: now the working class had its own, truly scientific ideology.

The viability of Marxism and its difference from other doctrines lies mostly in the fact that it is a genuine science based on real phenomena of life and on the laws governing its development. There is nothing far-fetched or utopian in it.

Marxism proceeds from the objective laws of social development, taking them duly into account. Precisely due to its scientific nature Marxism could foresee the course of social development and the inevitable transition of society to socialism, and that the working class was the revolutionary force capable of effecting this transition. Dialectical and historical materialism, political economy and scientific socialism are all components of Marxism as a scientific doctrine.

Another major quality of Marxism is its creative nature. Dogmas and stereotypes are alien to Marxism, and herein lies its distinction from many theories and views of the past and present, which claim to be the absolute and eternal truth with final postulates. Marxism (Marxism-Leninism in our time) is a constantly developing doctrine, for renovation is inherent in it while its basic principles are immutable, and it takes due account of new phenomena in life. Herein lies the "secret" of its eternal viability.

Further. The power of Marxism is in its revolutionary character. It is a reflection of the objectively progressive and revolutionary development of human society. By contrast with unscientific theories, which cannot offer a proper explanation of social development in the world, describing it either as a smooth evolution (reformism) or as spontaneous leaps (adventurism, subjectivism), Marxism provides an accurate analysis of the development of society. This development is propelled by due revolutionary changes. Marxism not only explains social development, but points to the way of changing it. It is an instrument of a revolutionary transformation of the world. A revolutionary theory, Marxism paves the way for revolutionary practice and gives it a clear vision of the goals and prospects of the movement and of the ways and means of struggle. As Lenin put it, "without revolutionary theory there

can be no revolutionary movement".<sup>1</sup> Marx and Engels did not hesitate to use their doctrine as an ideological weapon in the practical revolutionary struggle waged by the working class. Marxism has immediately become a powerful means of the revolutionary proletariat and all progressive working people fighting against capitalism, for the victory of socialism.

Marxism is an integral international theory which advocates the interests of the working people in the whole world and each individual country. Therefore the working people in any part of the globe come to realise (even if gradually) that Marxism is their ideology, and that this ideology alone offers them real possibilities in the struggle for their class interests. Aware of all this, the Communists, who make up the advanced contingent of the working class, launched the ideological struggle against the exploiters parallel with economic and political actions. Now that it had its own ideology, the working class could draw up a programme of struggle for its immediate and ultimate goals. The work to further improve and develop that ideology has been a priority task of the Communists ever since. Besides, Marx and Engels worked hard to disseminate their doctrine among the popular masses. To fuse Marxism with the workers' movement was the central task the Communists set themselves.

Marx and Engels set up the first international communist organisation—the Communist League—which at the dawn of the working-class movement proclaimed the principles of scientific communism and brought them to the movement. The policy-making, tactical and organisational principles of the Communist League are of historic significance. The League helped to educate the first proletarian revolutionaries. It was the first international communist organisation of the proletariat, the forerunner of the First International.

The most important conclusion drawn by Marxism, that the working class should have its own independent revolutionary party, was materialised in the Communist League. This conclusion is of unfading significance for the world revolutionary movement. The working class had a long way to cover before genuine communist parties formed in its ranks. But already in the days of Marx, more advanced workers came to realise the significance of a political organisation. The rise and growth of communist parties as the guiding force of the working class and all working people—such is a conclusion offered by the experience of the struggle waged by Marx and Engels when they headed the Communist League.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1977, p. 369.



### Chapter Three

#### *The First International and the Paris Commune*

The defeat of the 1848-1849 revolution was followed by a new upswing of the working-class movement in the late 1850s. The 1850s and 1860s completed the radical destruction of the feudal and absolutist order and saw a wide spread of bourgeois-democratic national movements and the establishment of the capitalist mode of production in many European countries. Having inflicted heavy defeats on feudalism with the help of the workers and peasants, the bourgeoisie grew increasingly fearful of the rising revolutionary movement of the proletariat. Its anti-revolutionary and anti-humane nature was becoming increasingly clear, as it more and more often sought alliance with its former enemy—feudalism.

On the other hand, the working class grew numerically, and its various unions, leagues and associations were springing up in the more developed countries. It combatted capitalist exploitation with increased unorganised actions, and in most cases its divided groups were defeated. There emerged diverse trends and theories of how to deliver the working people from oppression, and the workers instinctively strove for unity on the international scale. This was facilitated also by the growing tendency of the workers in various countries to obstruct the ruling classes' militaristic policy of aggrandizement and to do whatever they could to ensure universal peace. The proletarians felt an urgent need to share the experience gained in the struggle to solve most burning problems, to analyse, sum up and use this experience together, and to discuss ways to better coordinating their actions.

##### *1. The Founding of the International. Major Stages in Its Activity*

The theoretical and practical activities conducted by Marx and Engels during those years and their work to disseminate the ideas of scientific communism proved decisive for providing ideological premises for founding the International Working Men's Association. The workers saw in Marx their teacher, an outstanding revolutionary, a defender of all the oppressed and exploited. Even those who did not grasp his doctrine and

were still deluded by all kinds of petty-bourgeois theories of socialism, saw this. Marx enjoyed great prestige among all progressive people. The special invitation sent to him, in which he was asked to take part in the founding meeting of the international association of the proletariat, was a sign of recognition of his outstanding role in the movement for the emancipation of the working people.

Karl Marx and his close friend and associate, Frederick Engels, came to the fore as the outstanding proletarian theorists and tacticians of international caliber and the actual founders and leaders of an organisationally formed international working men's association. This was prompted by the entire development of the proletarian movement and vast amount of work they had done.

Following the proposal by English and French workers' associations, a meeting of representatives of workers' organisations which adhered to different ideological positions and political trends was convened on September 28, 1864 in St. Martin's Hall, London, the place where proletarian meetings were traditionally held. Elated mood and enthusiasm reigned in the overcrowded hall decorated with flags of various nations, in which English, French, German, Italian, Belgian, Polish and Irish workers gathered to set up their international organisation. The pretext of the meeting was to express solidarity with the national liberation struggle of the Polish people. Among the speakers was Karl Marx. Later, Engels had every reason to say that among all the participants there was only one man to whom it was clear what was going on and what kind of association was to be founded: he was the man who way back in 1848 had launched into the world the call, "Working men of all countries, unite!"<sup>1</sup>

A month later Marx was drawing up the Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association on instructions of its leadership. At that time he singled out the following convictions that had swayed the participants in the meeting.<sup>2</sup>

There was, in the first place, the workers' conviction that the struggle to free the proletariat from exploitation could not be successful unless its international unity was duly appreciated, and that in the conditions of workers' "national" isolation they could have only one thing in common—a common defeat. Marx formulated a proposition which is, in fact, an immutable law of proletarian solidarity: "Past

<sup>1</sup>"Marx, Heinrich Karl", in Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 22, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1963, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup>See *The General Council of the First International. 1864-1866*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 286.

experience has shown how disregard of that bond of brotherhood which ought to exist between the workmen of different countries, and incite them to stand firmly by each other in all their struggles for emancipation, will be chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts."<sup>1</sup>

Another conviction of the participants in the meeting followed from the previous one: "If the emancipation of the working classes requires their fraternal concurrence, how are they to fulfil that great mission with a foreign policy in pursuit of criminal designs, playing upon national prejudices, and squandering in piratical wars the people's blood and treasure?"<sup>2</sup> The delegates were inspired by the idea that the proletariat could not be indifferent to the annexationist foreign policy of the ruling classes and that its own policy should be to safeguard universal peace.

"The fight for such a foreign policy forms part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working classes," the Inaugural Address declared.<sup>3</sup>

Already in the first policy-making documents of the first international organisation of the proletariat Marx formulated the tasks of building up the unity and solidarity of workers in various countries in the struggle for their emancipation and against the criminal policy of war pursued by the ruling classes.

Those present at the inaugural meeting in St. Martin's Hall enthusiastically adopted the resolution on setting up the International Working Men's Association (IWMA), or the International, as it was called later, "in the interest of all the working people". Lenin described that historic event as the birth of an independent proletarian party.<sup>4</sup> The subsequent development of the Association showed that its setting up had heralded the emergence of the international revolutionary proletarian movement guided in its activities by the principles of scientific communism, that is, the emergence of the international communist movement.

So, the communist movement emerged as a result of the objective processes involved in the development of the working class and its battles against the bourgeoisie. It reflected the main contradiction in capitalist society and was a vivid expression of the regularities of social development at the time when the last exploiter system—capitalism—was being established.

<sup>1</sup>*The General Council of the First International. 1864-1866*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 286.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 286-87.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>4</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, 1973, p. 583.

The Association was founded by the working class and for the working class. "What was new in the International," Marx wrote, "was that it was established by the working men themselves and for themselves. Before the foundation of the International all the different organisations had been societies founded by some radicals among the ruling classes for the working classes, but the International was established by the working men for themselves."<sup>1</sup> He gave the lie to slanderous allegations that the drive for the international unity of the proletariat originated not in the working class but was provoked by some "agitators" or "Marxist plotters". He noted that the founding of the International "was not the work of any set of clever politicians: all the politicians in the world could not have created the situation and circumstances requisite for the success of the International".<sup>2</sup>

The International lived quite a short life in historical terms (from 1864 to 1876). Let us outline the main stages the Working Men's Association lived through since its founding.

—*The International was being constituted as a mass international organisation of the proletariat* (November 1864 to September 1866). Within that period the task was to ensure the proletariat membership of the General Council, the International's leading body, which worked hard to involve workers from various countries in the International and make the strike movement a school of the proletariat's international solidarity. The discussion of the issue helped reveal the true role played by strikes and the trade unions. The General Council explained why it was necessary to draw the proletariat in the mass democratic movement and to enlist its support for the national liberation movement (the Polish issue).

The 1865 London conference summed up the work done. The attitude of the working class to foreign policy, to the national issue and to the war threat in 1866 was determined with the participation of Marx and Engels. The General Council repelled the attempts of bourgeois democrats to bring the International under their influence. Preparations for the First Congress of the Association were conducted in accordance with the *Instructions for the Delegates of the Provisional General Council* drawn up by Marx.

The proletarian congress (September 3 to 8, 1866), the first of its kind, consolidated the organisational make-up of the Association which combined the utmost autonomy of national

<sup>1</sup>[Record of Marx's Speech on the Seventh Anniversary of the International], in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, 1986, pp. 633-34.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 633.



organisations with broad powers given to the General Council. The adoption of a number of resolutions and directives on combining political and economic activities contributed a great deal to the struggle for the programmatic and organisational principles of the Association, against the petty-bourgeois dogmas of Proudhonism<sup>1</sup>, and showed that the International was gaining a firm foothold on proletarian ground.

—*Establishment of socialist principles as the programmatic foundations of the International* (September 1866 to September 1868). The Geneva Congress was a success and the Association was joined by new organisations, in particular, by the English trade unions<sup>2</sup>. The International led the working people's economic struggle in 1866 and 1867, again staged actions of solidarity with the national liberation struggle of the Poles, and simultaneously urged the bourgeois pacifist League of Peace and Freedom to champion peace not merely in words.

The debates with Proudhonists on problems related to the socialisation of property in land and the adoption of a resolution on fighting for political liberties, etc. at the Second Lausanne Congress (September 2 to 8, 1867) showed that socialist elements were growing strong in the International. The General Council again expressed solidarity with the national liberation struggle of the Irish people, exposed the chauvinism of trade-union leaders, and mobilised the international proletariat for support to the strikers in 1868.

The international ties of the General Council were expanding. The principle of social property in the means of production was proclaimed, discussions were held and resolutions adopted at the Third Brussels Congress (September 6-13, 1868) on the attitude of the proletariat to war, on the socialisation of land, on the impact of the use of machines, on strikes, the all-round education of workers, shorter working day, and on cooperation. All this spelled the defeat of Proudhonism. After four years of joint work most of the In-

ternational members held a common view on the ultimate goal of the proletarian struggle—the building of socialist society. A special resolution called on proletarians in all countries to study the first volume of Marx' *Capital* which was published on September 14, 1867.

—*The International grew stronger ideologically and organisationally* (September 1868 to July 1870). As it set out to accomplish a more complex task, that of achieving a common approach to ways of implementing the socialist programme, the Association came up against the opposition of the pseudo-revolutionary anarchist organisation of Bakuninists.<sup>1</sup> The differences between the proletarian and anarchist positions (especially on problems concerning the state and political struggle) became especially evident before and during the Fourth Basel Congress (September 6 to 11, 1869). The report of the General Council, written by Marx, focused on the leadership of the strike movement. The Congress called for uniting the trade-union movement on both national and international levels. When the agrarian issue was discussed, the Marxists insisted on systematic explanatory work among peasants and a differentiated approach to them. In 1869-1870, the Association launched a campaign for the release of the imprisoned Irish fighters for national independence and exposed British colonialism and the chauvinism of the trade-union leaders, all of which was most important for the internationalist education of the working class. Marx proved that national liberation struggle and the socialist revolution are interrelated. In 1869-1870, when the French sections of the Association grew more active, Marx arrived at the conclusion that "revolutionary initiative will probably come from France".<sup>2</sup> The agenda of the forthcoming congress of the Association was to include the point on which the IWMA's pro-

<sup>1</sup>Proudhonism is a variety of petty-bourgeois socialism based on the views of Pierre Joseph Proudhon, a theorist of "peaceful" anarchism and a spokesman of ruined small proprietors. While they attacked large-scale capitalist production, the Proudhonists urged a perpetuation of small commodity production. They rejected political struggle, political parties, strikes and trade unions, and advanced utopian projects of eliminating exploitation by setting up producer, crediting and consumer associations. They also advocated a commodity exchange without money and a peaceful abolition of the state, in which they saw the main source of social injustice. Marx criticised Proudhon's ideas in *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

<sup>2</sup>The largest associations of workers, the trade unions confined themselves to struggles for better conditions for selling labour power and to demanding limited reforms in the framework of the capitalist state.

<sup>1</sup>The Bakuninists were followers of Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), the ideologist and politician of seditious anarchism. They opposed the Marxist theory and tactic of the working-class movement. They rejected the state of any kind and failed to see the world historic role of the proletariat. Bakunin proposed the idea of "equalising" the classes and setting up a "free federation" of grassroots associations. A secret revolutionary community, made up of "outstanding" individuals, should, in the Bakuninists' view, lead popular mutinies occurring regardless of the situation in a given country. Their tactic of conspiracies, instant rebellions and terrorism was venturesome and hostile to the Marxist doctrine on insurrection. Lenin described Bakuninism as an attitude of "the petty bourgeois who has despaired of his salvation" ("In Memory of Herzen", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 27). Bakuninism was severely criticised in *The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men's Association* by Marx and Engels, in Engels' *The Bakuninists at Work*, in Lenin's *On the Provisional Revolutionary Government*, and in other works.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Marx, "The General Council to the Federal Council of Romance Switzerland", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1985, p. 86.

letarian nucleus and the Bakuninists fundamentally differed, namely, the proportion between political activities and the struggle for the liberation of the working class and ways of ruling out war. The congress was not convened because the Franco-Prussian war broke out on July 19, 1870.

—*The International during the Franco-Prussian war* (1870-1871). That war was the largest one fought in Western Europe during the Association's existence. During the war the General Council, with Marx and Engels at the head, became the mobilising centre of action against aggressive foreign policies and militarism. The mass movement of the working class launched its first anti-war drive. In its First and Second Addresses and in other documents the General Council charted the general internationalist line for the working class so as to guard it against the influence of chauvinism, ensure its internationalist unity at different stages of the war, and help the German and French workers' organisations to adopt a correct policy.

—*The International and the Paris Commune* (1871). The Paris Commune emerged spontaneously and was the culmination of the development of the French and the entire international workers' movement in the 1860s. The main role in the movement was played by the International. Its French members were most active in the revolution. The situation in Paris and the actions of the Paris Commune were on the agenda of all sittings of the General Council, at which Marx and Engels insisted on adopting a correct attitude to the Commune, and offered valuable advice to the Communards. The General Council became the organising centre of the international movement of solidarity with the Commune and later helped its emigres.

Marx' *Civil War in France*, in which he summed up the experience of the Paris Commune, was a most important programme document of scientific communism. In that work the main questions related to the theory and tactics of the working-class struggle were further developed (the role of political struggle in the emancipation of the proletariat, the latter's attitude to the bourgeois state, the forms of statehood under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the allies of the working class, and the role played by the proletarian party). The Commune, an embodiment of proletarian internationalism, was a turning point in the activities of the International Working Men's Association.

—*The triumph of scientific communism—a new stage in the history of the International* (1871-1873). Under the influence of the first proletarian revolution, the membership of the Association and its organisations was growing, and the contradictions between the proletarian and anarchist

trends in it were getting ever deeper. The main task now was to unite all the revolutionary forces of the proletariat for the coming socialist revolutions. This new stage began after the 1871 London Conference, which declared that the Association was guided in its activities by the principles of scientific communism (the formation of a working-class party in each country as a condition for a victorious socialist revolution, establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a precondition for going over from capitalism to socialism, the stepping up of every kind of political struggle, the setting up of mass trade unions, the alliance of the working class with the peasants, etc.). The conference rejected the Bakuninists' attempts to impose an anarchist programme on the Association and dealt yet another blow at petty-bourgeois sectarianism.

After the conference the Bakuninists stepped up subversive actions, and the situation within the International deteriorated. At the same time, however, new working-class organisations were joining it. The Bakuninists' efforts to split the Association culminated in a conspiracy against the proletarian movement. They came out to smash the International, not the exploiter system. The intensive battle for the basic principles of scientific communism at the Fifth Hague Congress (September 2 to 7, 1872) ended in a victory for Marxism as the revolutionary ideology of the proletariat. That was when the ideological and organisational development of the Association reached its peak. Bakuninism was defeated, and its leaders were expelled from the International.

—*The last years of the International* (1873-1876). At Engels' proposal, the Hague Congress adopted a decision on moving the seat of the General Council to New York, because the conditions for its activities in Europe worsened (the Association members were persecuted, and the petty-bourgeois element ran wild). The Sixth (and the last) Congress, held on September 8, 1873 in Geneva confirmed the Hague decisions and loyalty to proletarian internationalism. It became increasingly obvious that a political party should be set up in each country, which could not be done by the Association in its present structure. At its conference in Philadelphia on July 15, 1876, it decided to suspend its activities until new conditions would arise for its being restored in a new form. The disbandment of the International did not mean a cessation, but a change in form, of the international activities of the working class in various countries in the new conditions.



## 2. *The International Proletariat Learns General Ways of Struggle*

Speaking about the role of the International in historical development as a whole, Lenin wrote: "In uniting the labour movement of various countries, striving to channel into joint activity the various forms of non-proletarian, pre-Marxist socialism ... and in combating the theories of all these sects and schools, Marx hammered out a uniform tactic for the proletarian struggle of the working class in the various countries."<sup>1</sup> Lenin formulated concisely the most significant in the diverse activities of the Association. He singled out the chief task at the stage of preparations by the working class for future battles for power—to devise single tactics of proletarian struggle in various countries. He meant, of course, not designing stereotypes and neither imposition, nor a mechanical application of tactical methods regardless of a situation at the time or national specifics. What he meant was formulation of principles of proletarian struggle (theoretical, strategic and tactical) common to the proletariat as a class exploited by the class of capitalists in all countries and seeking ways of freeing itself from this exploitation. Only through solving this problem, posed by Marx and Engels, could the mounting proletarian struggle acquire a practical basis opening the way to effective struggle against international capital, to socialist revolutions in various countries.

At the same time Lenin saw the diverse, but essentially common ways along which the founders of Marxism had led the International towards this goal: unification of the working-class movement in various countries, directing different forms of non-proletarian socialism along the path of joint activity, and combating the ideologies and policies of sectarian petty-bourgeois trends.

### *Unite the Proletarians of All Countries*

Delimiting the strategic stages in the international proletarian movement and defining the strategic goal of the International Working Men's Association, Marx wrote: "The working classes would have to conquer the right to emancipate themselves on the battlefield. The task of the International was to organise and combine the forces of labour for the coming struggle."<sup>2</sup> The idea of a fraternal union of proletarians on an international scale was clearly expressed in the

very name of the Association. The founders of scientific communism explained that such an association was necessary because the workers in various countries were in much the same conditions and had common interests and goals. "Our Association," Engels said, "has been founded to be a centre of contact and joint action for labour unions in various countries pursuing one and the same goal—the defence, development and full emancipation of the working class."<sup>1</sup>

For the first time the proletariat became organised internationally. In those conditions that was the most effective form of international worker solidarity. As they came to realise that their efforts were isolated, the workers saw that the simplest way of uniting themselves was to set up an international organisation. This organisation of the proletariat of various countries proved to be the best means of overcoming the main weakness of the workers in the struggle against their oppressors—lack of unity.

Proletarian solidarity with the struggle waged by the workers in various countries was the most tangible result of international unity. Marx viewed solidarity as the basic principle of the International: "It is by establishing this vivifying principle on a strong basis, among all the working people of all countries, that we shall achieve the great goal we have set ourselves."<sup>2</sup> He meant not only solidarity among workers. At all stages of its history the Association worked hard to organise actions of solidarity both with the economic and political action by proletarians in various countries and with national liberation movements, defending colonial peoples from oppression. It was symbolic, indeed, that an act of solidarity with the Polish national liberation movement, one of the most vigorous at that time, gave direct cause for founding the International Working Men's Association.

Marx and Engels said international solidarity must never be interpreted in a one-sided, egoistic way. The following example will illustrate exactly what they meant. Once, when the workers of cigar factories in Antwerp went on strike, they asked the International for aid. The International responded promptly by sending them money from the small funds raised among workers of other countries. But the leaders of the strike refused to display minimal solidarity on their part. "Do these gentlemen really call it solidarity when they take money from British and other workers who had contributed it to the International and then pocket

<sup>1</sup>"Engels an Carlo Cafiero in Barletta", London, 1-3 Juli 1871, in Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 33, p. 656.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Marx, "The Hague Congress", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Two, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 293.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Karl Marx", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>[Record of Marx's Speech on the Seventh Anniversary of the International], in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 634.

it and do not even join our Association as the first proof that they are prepared to do the same for others?" Engels wrote indignantly. "We have a different opinion on that score, and these are the last people for whom the International should work. Those who wish to use the aid rendered by our Association should be prepared to carry their share of the burden."<sup>1</sup> Reciprocal solidarity and support of other contingents of the working class are a major sign of true internationalism.

The unification of the proletariat through the activities of the Association showed that working-class internationalism, far from contradicting genuine patriotism, suggests a harmonious combination of the international and national goals of the proletariat. Writing a letter to an Italian professor, a bourgeois democrat, Engels explained that "in the working-class movement *truly* national ideas, that is, ideas corresponding to economic factors both in industry and in agriculture, factors dominating in a given country, are at the same time also *truly international* ideas".<sup>2</sup>

The natural combination of the national and international ensured genuine equality, enabling the Association to be the true centre of contact and joint action.

In its daily activities the International was connected by a multitude of links with members of the proletarian and democratic movements in various countries. It was the first to introduce joint and equal discussion of policy-making, tactical and organisational matters of concern to all national working-class organisations at its congresses and at sessions of the General Council.

The International introduced major principles of unity, which have lost none of their significance today. Among these are obligatory recognition of the main principles of the Association for all its organisations, obligatory compliance with the decisions jointly adopted in the framework of the Association, and prevention of any actions within the Association which would contradict its principles.

The international communist movement today does not have a leading centre as it used to have before. But it cannot exist as a single whole unless all its members observe certain common principles cementing political solidarity in the movement. The norms of relations among the fraternal parties were elaborated jointly to be shared by all Communists. All the parties have committed themselves to observe both the principle of independence and equality and the prin-

ciple of mutual support and international solidarity among all Marxist-Leninist parties. These norms are the result of continuance of the main principles of the International observed by the communist movement today.

*For Joint Action Based on a Flexible Approach  
and Firm Principles*

By the time the International was founded the theory of the liberation struggle of the proletariat had on the whole been framed by the founders of Marxism. They proved that this was "the class that bear in their hands the regeneration of mankind".<sup>1</sup>

By that time communist ideas had struck root in the working-class movement itself. The workers' educational societies, which adhered to scientific socialism or were approaching a socialist position, made up the most advanced section of the International. The international London German Worker's Educational Association, in which Marx and Engels took an active part, was one of the largest and most active organisations of this kind. Marx and Engels addressed its members with a series of lectures and reports and maintained contacts with its activists, thereby contributing a lot to their ideological and political education. By the 1860s, the organisation had become the centre of immigrant workers which maintained contacts with workers' associations in other countries. It helped strikers, expressed solidarity with Polish insurgents and was active in the Association's work.

The problem was, however, that scientific socialism was at that time accessible to a relatively small part of the working-class movement. On the whole, the movement was fairly motley ideologically and politically. Most of the working class was just turning into the industrial proletariat and, by virtue of its immaturity, came under the influence of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois theories. What was common to all these forms of the movement was, according to Lenin, "incomprehension of the materialist basis of historical movement, inability to single out the role and significance of each class in capitalist society, concealment of the bourgeois nature of democratic reforms under diverse, quasi-socialist phrases about the 'people', 'justice', 'right' and so on".<sup>2</sup>

This is how Marx accounted for the ideological and political

<sup>1</sup>"Engels an Philippe Coenen in Antwerpen; London, 4. August 1871", in Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 33, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup>"Engels an Gennaro Bovio in Trani; London, 16. April 1872", in Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 33, p. 444.

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx, "The Fourth Annual Report of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 582.



diversity within the International in the initial period: "As the stage of development reached by different sections of workers in the same country and by the working class in different countries is bound to vary greatly, the actual movement necessarily expresses itself in very diverse theoretical forms."<sup>1</sup>

In those conditions it was essential correctly to find a way of making the working masses really understand the scientific theory and tactics of struggle for their own emancipation: joint actions on the basis of a flexible and principled approach.

In the Inaugural Address of the Working Men's Association Marx showed how, proceeding from the urgent demands of the day posed by the worsening conditions of workers, they could and should be led towards general conclusions which would shape their class outlook and prepare them for greater tasks, including the struggle for power. The Address shows how to conduct a discussion of erroneous views caused in the masses by an immature or oversimplified understanding of the ways of revolutionary struggle. In a calm and comradely manner Marx discussed important issues, convincing the workers by using well understood arguments and so drawing them in joint activities, even if they did not yet share communist views.

He gave credit to the successful struggle for a legislation reducing the working day, waged by the English working class. He spoke with respect about the success achieved by "the unassisted efforts of a few bold hands" in the cooperative movement (which, however, was regarded by the Proudhonists as a universal means of emancipating the working class without a mass-scale political struggle), and stressed that "the value of these great social experiments cannot be overrated".<sup>2</sup> At the same time Marx put it straight to the workers that "however excellent in principle, and however useful in practice, co-operative labour, if kept within the narrow circle of the casual efforts of private workmen, will never be able ... to free the masses, nor even to perceptibly lighten the burden of their miseries".<sup>3</sup> Using the term "co-operative labour" recognised by the workers, Marx led them to understanding the idea of struggle for political power: "To save the industrious masses, co-operative labour ought to be developed to national dimensions, and, consequently, to be fostered by national means... To conquer political power

<sup>1</sup>"Marx to Engels in Manchester; London, March 5, 1869", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 207.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Marx, "Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, 1985, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12.

has therefore become the great duty of the working classes."<sup>1</sup>

The method of convincing the workers on the main issues of the class policy of the proletariat, which combined a broad outlook, scientific profundity and a principled stand in defending the basic tenets of proletarian socialism, opened a real way to joint actions, to promoting the struggle for vital class goals and was characteristic of the activities of the International. This was most clearly manifest during the preparations for, and convocation of its first congress in 1866 in Geneva. By that time the member organisations were fairly well prepared ideologically for adopting a common platform for a proletarian mass movement.

The instruction on problems confronting the congress drawn up by Marx for the delegates to Provisional Central Council was of fundamental significance. Pursuing further the line of the Inaugural Address, Marx showed how the broad masses of the proletariat could be united on the common platform of class struggle, which should be outlined firmly, though in moderate terms. The recommendations drawn up by Marx, which underlay the congress decisions on the trade unions, on the struggle for an 8-hour working day, on cooperation and on women's labour, had been deliberately limited by him to the tasks which would make it really possible to found a union immediately and to conduct urgent coordinated actions to help organise the working people and promote their class struggle. The instruction, which tied up the economic actions by workers with their political struggle against the capitalist system, was approved by the congress, to become a common platform of the international working-class movement for many years to come.

Marx and Engels were invariably guided by the principle of being "*fortiter in re, suaviter in modo*".<sup>2</sup> We find interesting evidence of this in *A Worker's Reminiscences of Karl Marx*, written by Friedrich Lessner. Heated argument often erupted at the sittings of the General Council of the International, he recalled. "Blanquists, Proudhonists, Autonomists, Anarchists and all kinds of other 'ists' were continually at loggerheads," he wrote, and "Marx had great difficulty in making the squabblers see reason. The patience he generally displayed on such occasions beggars all description... Those who reproached Marx with intolerance should have seen just once how he could grasp people's thoughts and prove the

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>"Marx to Engels in Manchester; London, November 4, 1864", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 140.

falseness of their inferences and conclusions."<sup>1</sup>

The experience of the International showed for the first time that to channel various manifestations of the working-class movement along the path of joint actions was not only possible but useful. "Had we from 1864-73 insisted," Engels wrote in 1887, "on working together only with those who openly adopted our platform—where should we be today? I think all our practice has shown that it is possible to work along with the general movement of the working class at every one of its stages without giving up or hiding our own distinct position and even organisation."<sup>2</sup>

*For Ideological Unity, Against Opportunism*

In the opinion of the General Council of the International the working class had to be united to carry out joint actions, which was necessary to enable the workers to establish ideological unity. The experience of the International showed that the working class could become firmly united only if its unity rests on the sound ideological basis of scientific communism. Adherence to its principles, with all the diversity of specific national conditions, forms and methods of work, has always been essential for the international communist movement.

The considerate and respectful attitude to the working masses by Marx, Engels and other proletarian leaders in the International were combined with the struggle to overcome opportunism of all kinds—a result of the petty-bourgeois influence on the proletariat. "The *International* was founded," Marx explained, "in order to replace the socialist or semi-socialist sects by a really militant organisation of the working class."<sup>3</sup>

When the working-class movement was at the outset, various forms of utopian socialism were a natural sign that the proletariat was not mature enough as a class. That was "the childhood of the proletarian movement, like astrology and alchemy were the childhood of science".<sup>4</sup> But as the working class developed and scientific communism emerged, old-time "childish" mistakes could well become reactionary. "The development of socialist sectarianism and that of the real working-class movement always stand in inverse proportion to each other. Sects are (historically) justified so

<sup>1</sup>*Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1957, pp. 170, 171.

<sup>2</sup>"Engels to Florence Kelley-Wischnewetzky in New York; London, January 27, 1887", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 378.

<sup>3</sup>"Marx to Friedrich Bolte in New York; London, November 23, 1871", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 253.

<sup>4</sup>Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, "Die angeblichen Spaltungen in der Internationale", in Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 18, 1969, p. 34.

long as the working class is not yet ripe for an independent historical movement. As soon as it has attained this maturity all sects are essentially reactionary."<sup>1</sup>

The revolutionary-proletarian wing of the International headed by Marx carried on an irreconcilable struggle against reformist and sectarian trends throughout its history. The General Council, citing examples, demonstrated to the workers the harm caused by the erroneous policies of reformism and chauvinism pursued by the English trade-union leaders; by the Proudhonists' rejection of the need to determine the socialist goals of the proletariat and its participation in political activities; by the attempts of the Lassalleans to bar German workmen from the International; the plotting tactics by the Blanquists, who always demanded "direct" action, taking no account of the situation at a given time; the disorganising activities of the Bakuninists, who rejected the proletarian party principle and the dictatorship of the proletariat; and proponents of other views hampering the shaping of class awareness among workers and obstructing their international revolutionary struggles.

The General Council worked especially hard to combat the subversive activities of anarchists in the International and revealed the typical elements in the tactics employed by the opportunist splitting groups. Characterising the anarchist Alliance of Socialist Democracy, they wrote: "Here we have a society which ... directs its blows not against the existing governments but against the revolutionaries who refuse to accept its dogma and leadership..., it infiltrates the ranks of the international organisation of the working class, at first attempts to dominate it and, when this plan fails, sets to work to disorganise it. It brazenly substitutes its sectarian programme and narrow ideas for the broad programme and great aspirations of our Association; it organises within the public sections of the International its own little secret sections which obey the same instructions...; in its newspapers it publicly attacks all those who refuse to submit to its will, and by its own avowal provokes open warfare within our ranks."<sup>2</sup>

The experience of struggle by proletarian revolutionaries in the International against right-wing, reformist and conciliatory trends in the proletarian movement, as well as against the pseudo-left, anarchist and putschist deviations has lost none of its significance. It shows that these ideological differences tend to grow into political struggles threatening to harm the unity of the proletariat on the inter-

<sup>1</sup>"Marx to Friedrich Bolte in New York; London, November 23, 1871", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup>*The Hague Congress of the First International*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 507.



national and national scale. Experience shows that the reactionaries never fail to make use of actions by opportunists, and it teaches one to act according to principle and be vigilant against both right and pseudo-left opportunism.

The triumph of the doctrine of Marx, which was seen in the fusion of Marxism with the proletarian mass movement, was the chief result achieved by the International. It facilitated the struggle by the working class. That revealed the power of scientific socialism as the most effective ideological weapon in the liberation struggle, the only doctrine which could scientifically, and therefore correctly, indicate to the working people the goals and means of their struggle.

### 3. General Principles of the Strategy and Tactics of Proletarian Struggle

#### *The Theoretical Basis of Strategy and Tactics*

United tactics of proletarian struggle cannot be devised without a theoretical basis of revolutionary strategy and tactics. As Engels put it, "the historical theory of Marx is the fundamental condition of all coherent and consistent revolutionary tactics".<sup>1</sup>

The principles of the common strategy and tactics of the International were based on the fundamental principles underlying the theory of proletarian class struggle formulated by Marx in the Rules of the Association:

- the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves; this is the struggle for equal rights and duties, and for the abolition of all class rule;

- the economic subjection of the man of labour to the monopoliser of the means of labour, that is, the sources of life, lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms;

- the economic emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means;

- all efforts aiming at that great end have hitherto failed from the want of solidarity among working people, and from the absence of the fraternal bond of union between the working classes of different countries;

- the emancipation of labour is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries; depending for its solution on the cooperation, practical and theoretical, of working men in all countries, demanding that a re-

lapse into old errors be prevented and the still disconnected movements be immediately combined.<sup>1</sup>

The first volume of *Capital*, published when the International was in existence, provided a profound theoretical foundation for the proletarian struggle. In that book Marx proved that since the regularities of capitalism were operative everywhere, the working class should adopt the main common forms and methods of struggle. Johann Philipp Becker, a prominent figure in the International, wrote: "*Capital* is our sword, our armour, a weapon for attack, and a weapon for defence."<sup>2</sup>

As they guided the activities of the Association, Marx and Engels elaborated a theory of the liberation struggle of the proletariat. They proved that its economic and political struggles had to be combined, explained the role of proletarian internationalism and produced a theory of organising the working class and its highest form—the political party. They elaborated the proletarian stand on war and peace issues, on wars of liberation and wars of aggression, on national-colonial problems, exposing colonialism and defending the enslaved peoples, and on the agrarian question, proving the need for the transfer of land into public ownership.

The conclusions made by Marx and Engels about socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat as a state form of the working-class power were exceptionally important in the development of the theory of scientific socialism. Their works and the documents issued by the Association offered scientific prognostication on such aspects of the socialist remodelling of society as the need to establish public ownership of the means of production, introduce socialist economic planning, overcome the basic disparity between town and country and between mental and manual work, and so on.

#### *Elaborating General Principles of Strategy and Tactics*

The activity of the International and its General Council developed among the leaders of working-class organisations a scientific approach to elaborating the strategy and tactics of proletarian struggle, and taught them to take into account the real conditions and the requirements of the working-class movement and, on that basis, to advance specific goals, demands and appeals. The revolutionary-proletarian wing of the International worked to prevent reckless actions, unwarranted

<sup>1</sup>"Engels to Vera Ivanovna Zasulich in Geneva; London, April 23, 1885", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1982, pp. 361-62.

<sup>1</sup>See Karl Marx, "Provisional Rules of the Association", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>ZPA IML; F. 185, No. 25/5.

provocation of working-class action and premature attempts at higher forms of struggle, and, as well, the under-rating or non-use of the available possibilities for struggle, unreserved advocacy of spontaneous action, or accommodation to the policy of the bourgeoisie.

It was of special significance that the proletariat began to combine actions on economic and political issues. Marx explained that "every movement in which the working class as a *class* confronts the ruling classes and tries to constrain them by pressure from without is a political movement. For instance, the attempt by strikes, etc., in a particular factory or even in a particular trade to compel individual capitalists to reduce the working day is a purely economic movement. On the other hand the movement to force through an eight-hour, etc., *law* is a *political* movement. And in this way, out of the separate economic movements of the workers there grows up everywhere a *political* movement, that is to say, a *class* movement, with the object of enforcing its interests in a general form, in a form possessing general, socially coercive force."<sup>1</sup>

Marx and Engels were pointing out the need to combine practical economic struggle with political and also ideological struggle. "It is precisely in this, as it were concentric, attack," Engels observed, "that the strength and invincibility" of the labour movement lies.<sup>2</sup> The strategy and tactics of the revolutionary-proletarian wing in the Association was to prepare a revolutionary onslaught by the workers on capital, to accomplish a socialist revolution.

Working on the strategy and tactics of the international proletarian movement, Marx and Engels formulated a major proposition that the struggle for its ultimate goal—communism—should be combined with efforts to accomplish immediate tasks, with the struggle for democracy. The pseudo-revolutionaries said one should refrain from the struggle for democracy because they believed this meant a recognition of the existing exploiter system. Explaining that mistake, Engels pointed out: "The political freedoms, the right of assembly and association, and the freedom of the press—those are our weapons. Are we to sit back and abstain while somebody tries to rob us of them? It is said that a political act on our part implies that we accept the existing state of affairs. On the contrary, so long as this state of affairs offers us the means of protesting against it, our use of these means

does not signify that we recognise the prevailing order."<sup>1</sup>

The experience of the International shows that the struggle for democratic rights and freedoms has been a major task ever since the emergence of the international working-class movement. It is the Working Men's Association that made the struggle for democracy, for progressive reforms, part of the international struggle of working people for socialism. Through the International the working class began to carry out its historic mission of worldwide significance as it fought for its class interests, safeguarding the independence of its class positions and simultaneously expressing and defending the general democratic interests of the non-proletarian sections of the population, seeking broad alliance with them to attain the common goals of putting an end to oppression, exploitation, aggressive wars and national bondage.

High morality and humanism of the working class were self-evident to Marx: the working class fought to liberate not only itself but all the exploited and oppressed. But, aware that the international association of workers would attract the attention of the broadest popular masses at different levels of political culture and anticipating the lies and prejudices the exploiters would be spreading, Marx thought it possible to include in the Rules an official statement by the International that its members recognised "truth, justice, and morality, as the basis of their conduct towards each other, and towards all men, without regard to colour, creed, or nationality;

"They hold it the duty of a man to claim the rights of a man and a citizen, not only for himself, but for every man who does his duty. No rights without duties, no duties without rights."<sup>2</sup>

The statement sounds with new force today, disproving the slanderous allegations of the imperialist "human rights champions", showing that Communists have since the very origin of their movement fought consistently for human rights and championed high morals and genuine humanism.

Marx and Engels proved it was necessary to win over for the revolution the broad masses of working people, especially the peasants, as allies of the proletariat. Socialist revolution cannot win completely, Marx explained, unless it is supported by the working peasants in the countries where they make up a considerable proportion of the population.

At the time of the International the national liberation movement had not yet gained a wide scope. But the revolu-

<sup>1</sup>"Marx to Friedrich Bolte in New York; London, November 23, 1871", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 254-55.

<sup>2</sup>Frederick Engels, "Preface to *The Peasant War in Germany*", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Two, p. 170.

<sup>1</sup>Frederick Engels, "Apropos of Working-Class Political Action", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Two, pp. 245-46.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Marx, "Provisional Rules of the Association", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 15.



tionary-proletarian wing with Marx and Engels at the head always taught the working class to be intolerant to national oppression, pointing that the socialist ideal was opposed to any kind of oppression, social or national. The proletarian leaders of the Association considered it to be the duty of the working class to support the struggle for national emancipation, stressing that it was part and parcel of the struggle for its own emancipation. Lenin called the attitude of the International to the liberation struggle in Ireland the greatest example of "the attitude the proletariat of the oppressor nations should adopt towards national movements".<sup>1</sup> Marx and Engels were the first to attach great significance to the popular actions at that time in Asia, seeing in them the heralds of future great national liberation revolutions, which would merge into a general stream of the liberation struggle against social and national oppression.

They formulated the proposition that the proletariat can accomplish a revolution either in a peaceful or armed way. "The association does not dictate the form of political movements", Marx pointed out, "it only requires a pledge as to their end."<sup>2</sup> The founders of Marxism produced a theory of armed uprising, but stressed also the importance of other forms of struggle. One should not think, Marx said, that to have workers in parliament is of small importance. Governments are hostile to us, he went on, and must be rebuffed by any means at our disposal. Every worker in parliament is a victory over them, but worthy men must be elected. Marx and Engels also stressed that such forms of struggle could be successful if combined with a mounting struggle of the working masses.

Due to the determined actions by the revolutionary-proletarian wing, the idea of using diverse forms and methods of struggle, above all those suggested by the very logic of the struggle depending on a situation at a given time, won recognition in the international working-class movement. Marx and Engels strongly objected to absolutising some or other forms and methods of struggle by the "left" and right-wing opportunists, and taught how to use these forms and methods depending on the balance of class forces, and how to combine legal and illegal ways, peaceful propaganda and revolutionary violence, with regard to the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, 1977, p. 442.

<sup>2</sup>[Record of Marx's Interview with *The World Correspondent*], in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 602.

#### *War Between Peoples Must Be Made Impossible*

One of the main issues of the theory and tactics of working-class struggle elaborated and carried into effect by the International was the deliverance of the proletariat and the whole of mankind from the threat of war between peoples, the safeguarding of international peace.

Hardly anyone doubts today that the international working class has a special role to play in preventing a new world war. But it was not yesterday that it came to play this role. Back in the years of the First International, Marx pointed out that its congresses were in themselves congresses of peace.<sup>1</sup> From the very beginning of the working-class movement Marx drew special attention to this aspect of the historic mission of the proletariat. "On you ... depends the glorious task," he wrote to the American workers, "to prove to the world that now at last the working classes are bestriding the scene of history no longer as servile retainers, but as independent actors, conscious of their own responsibility, and able to command peace where their would-be masters shout war."<sup>2</sup> This was the fundamental premise of the International on the war and peace issue.

Marx understood, however, that at that time the working class was not sufficiently organised to have the decisive influence on the developments, to rule out war altogether. But another aspect of the matter is more important. Even at that time this difficulty did not cause an underestimation by the International of the burning need for struggle against militarism and war. The following tactical line was mapped out at the Brussels congress of the Association which passed a decision saying that "The people even now can diminish the number of wars by opposing those who declare and make war; that this concerns above all the working classes, who have almost exclusively to shed their blood; that to do this there is a practical and legal means which can be immediately acted upon."<sup>3</sup>

Provoking fratricidal wars, the ruling classes sought to break the working people's solidarity by spreading a militaristic hysteria among them, to poison their minds by bourgeois nationalism and chauvinism, and incite ethnic strife among the working class. The International set the immediate task of campaigning against war everywhere, exposing the

<sup>1</sup>See "Record of Marx's Speech on the Attitude of the International Working Men's Association to the Congress of the League of Peace and Freedom", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 426.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Marx, "Address to the National Labour Union of the United States", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup>*The General Council of the First International. 1868-1870*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966, p. 297.

policy pursued by warmongers—"to combine in simultaneous denunciations, and to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations".<sup>1</sup>

The International explained to the workers that the unity of the working class in various countries should ultimately make wars between peoples impossible. It laid special stress on combating counter-revolutionary attempts by the ruling classes to keep the peoples in bondage and preserve the power of reaction by force of arms. Such internationalist actions as disruption of an armed intervention by the British government on the side of slave owners during the Civil War in America, the ardent support of the national liberation struggle of the Polish and Irish peoples and others gave rise to proletarian solidarity which has reached an unprecedented scope today. The Inaugural Address pointed out that, on the one hand, the heroic resistance put up by the working class, which had once prevented the ruling classes from an act of "criminal madness"—the export of counter-revolution (intervention in the Civil War in the USA)—and, on the other hand, the coordinated militaristic and aggressive actions by the ruling classes in various countries "have taught the working classes the duty to master themselves the mysteries of international politics; to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective governments; to counteract them, if necessary, by all means in their power".<sup>2</sup>

The proletarian anti-war policy pursued by the International differed basically from the policy of bourgeois pacifism, which failed to see the class character of armed conflicts. The International leaders explained to the workers the need to determine their attitude to armed conflicts depending on their character. They urged the workers to come out against aggressive wars, but to back up all forms of rebuffing the exploiters (including armed struggle), national liberation actions and resistance to the aggressor. The International was the first to distinguish between wars of aggression and wars of liberation and combined the uncompromising struggle for peace with the recognition of all forms of resistance to oppression and support of the struggle for social emancipation and national liberation.

The value of the diverse experience accumulated due to the International was put to a hard test during the first proletarian revolution, the Paris Commune, which "was a

superb example of the great proletarian movement of the nineteenth century".<sup>1</sup> This experience was confirmed by both the successes and mistakes of the Commune. Its lessons stimulated the further development of scientific socialism. The Commune itself was a spiritual off-spring of the International; in a way, it was a product of the entire preceding activities of the International Working Men's Association to build up the revolutionary energy of the proletariat.

#### 4. *The First International and the Paris Commune*

Early in the 1870s the international proletariat and its organisation, the First International, were confronted with a hard test during the Franco-Prussian War. First, the International had to determine in practice its attitude to war. Second, the war itself was complex by character. It was a result of a clash of conflicting interests of the ruling classes of France and Prussia. In the late 1860s, the contradictions between France and Prussia had greatly increased, and so did the internal contradictions in France. The emperor's power hoped to bolster up its positions in the country and in Europe by means of a small but victorious war. So the French ruling elite pursued unfair, dynastic goals in that war. Meanwhile the Prussian government under Bismarck, wishing to unify Germany through wars, was provoking France to start a conflict. The fair and historically progressive goal of the German nation was being attained by unseemly methods typical of bourgeois-junker monarchy—methods of a dynastic war. All this made it far more difficult for the First International to determine its tactics with regard to that war.

The Franco-Prussian War broke out in June 1870. The governments of the two countries bent every effort to intoxicate the workers and peasants with jingoism and throw them into the flames of war for their dynastic and class interests. During that hard trial the international proletariat had to go through, the First International splendidly worked out its tactics with regard to war. When the war began, Marx and Engels, in the First Address of the International, called on the workers in various countries to oppose militarism and the aggressive plans of the French ruling elite. They saw the need to back the objectively progressive cause of uniting Germany. But they also urged the working class to prevent Germany from turning the war into a war of aggression. When the war ultimately grew unjust on the part of Germany,

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx, "Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 13.  
<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Lessons of the Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 472.



that is, when the Prussian troops began to seize French territory, Marx and Engels exposed the aggressive goals of the Prussian reactionaries in the Second Address on the Franco-Prussian War and backed up French national independence.

Both Addresses of the General Council of the International evoked a broad response among workers, helping them to avoid being poisoned by jingoism and to see the falsity of war propaganda which tried to disguise the aggressive character of the war. Marx called for the workers' resolute action against war of aggression.

Militarism and aggressive wars run counter to the interests of the proletariat—this was the main message of these Addresses issued in different languages. Noting the horrible aftermaths of the European war, Marx believed the aggressive plans of the warmongers could be foiled by vigorous action on the part of the working class. He was convinced that an alliance of the workers of all countries would ultimately rule out war altogether.

The tactics elaborated by the First International with regard to the Franco-Prussian War was of great significance for the entire subsequent working-class movement. Later, however, during World War I, the right-wing leaders of the Second International betrayed the Marxist position on aggressive wars and supported such a war. Only true Marxists strictly adhere to the principles formulated by the First International, the principles of opposition to unfair wars. Historical experience has enabled the present communist movement thoroughly to elaborate its tactics on war and peace issues.

France soon lost the war. On September 2, 1870, the French troops together with Emperor Napoleon III capitulated. When the news reached Paris, the popular masses in the French capital rose against the monarchic regime and toppled it on September 4. A bourgeois government which came to power called itself a "government of national defence", though it appeared to be, in fact, a "government of national betrayal". Faced with the further growth of the revolution, the government accepted the most humiliating terms of peace with the Prussian military command.

And again the First International and its leaders were confronted with a most difficult task of determining a policy with regard to the mounting revolutionary movement in France. Marx and Engels realised that objective and subjective preconditions were not yet ripe for a proletarian revolution in France. Therefore Marx warned the French proletariat that a possible rising would be premature. But the revolutionary activity of the French people kept growing. The bourgeois government was gravely concerned over the developments and even decided to surrender Paris to the Germans. The

only force that adhered to revolutionary national positions was the National Guard and its Central Committee, formed by the working people at that time. The bourgeois government, headed by Louis-Adolphe Thiers, attempted to disarm the National Guard and seize its artillery guns which had been bought with the money of the Paris working people. This brought forth an armed uprising of the people of Paris headed by the proletariat on March 18, 1871, as a result of which the Paris Commune was established.

*The Paris Commune was the first proletarian revolution, the first ever dictatorship of the proletariat.* It existed only 72 days, from March 18 to May 28, but left a profound trace in the history of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. It emerged at a time when social contradictions in France grew most acute. It had been prepared also by the struggles conducted by the international working-class movement, the First International, and the spread of Marxist ideas among proletarians.

As the power of the bourgeoisie was overthrown, the Central Committee of the National Guard became the provisional revolutionary government which suppressed the resistance of counter-revolutionary elements and ensured the carrying out of major revolutionary measures.

The elections to the Commune were held on March 26 in Paris. Most of the seats in it (65 out of 86) went to revolutionary organisations. Elected to the Commune were 26 workers, the rest were office employees, teachers, physicians, journalists and lawyers. The Commune comprised 18 Blanquists, 13 Proudhonists, 10 left Proudhonists, and 19 revolutionary democrats or Neo-Jacobins. 33 members of Commune were in the First International. In its social make-up, the Commune represented the workers and petty bourgeoisie.

The historic achievement of the Paris Commune was that it smashed the bourgeois state and replaced it by the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat. On March 29 the Commune passed a decree on disbanding the old army and replacing it with the National Guard, or arming the people. This was followed by the abolition of the bourgeois police. The Commune separated the church from the state and adopted a decree on a transfer of the property of monasteries to the state.

Simultaneously a new, proletarian state machinery was being built. Proletarian statehood rested on the principles of electivity, public responsibility and replaceability of all officials, and collective administration. The Paris Commune gave up the bourgeois principle of separation of powers. The Commune itself combined legislative and executive power. It set up from among its members 10 commis-

sions, including the Executive Commission (later replaced by the Committee of Public Salvation) which exercised overall administration. Thus the Communards offered an example of genuine democracy, of proletarian democracy.

From its very inception, the Commune set about effecting major social and economic measures. It made the first steps in socialising the means of production: the factories left by their owners were handed over to workers' associations and reopened under workers' management. Workers' control was established at the National Printing House and in the Louvre arms workshops.

The Commune took measures to improve the living conditions for the population. It set out to ensure labour protection, to combat unemployment and eliminate the large differences in payment for work. One of the first decrees established a ceiling on the salaries of civil servants, equal to wages of highly skilled workers (6,000 francs a year). Working conditions were improved, the lower wage limit was fixed, and salaries for junior employees were increased.

The Commune cancelled rent debts for a definite period of time and suspended rent payment between April 1 and June 1. Personal property in pawnshops was returned to its owners free. A decree was passed on paying commercial bills on a three years' installment plan. Thereby the Commune displayed concern for the interests of the petty bourgeoisie, which faced the threat of ruin.

A series of important reforms were effected in culture and education. Separation of the school from the church began. Free and compulsory primary education was being introduced. Under the Paris Commune, the activities of democratic public organisations—trade unions, clubs, sections of the International, vigilance committees, and others—were promoted in every way.

Various members of the Commune displayed different attitudes to the political, social and economic measures. The Commune soon found itself divided into the "majority" (Blanquists and Neo-Jacobins) and the "minority" (Proudhonists). The differences over centralisation and limits of power and measures to combat counter-revolution grew so acute that for some time the "minority" even did not attend the Commune sittings.

The differences and, to a greater extent, the lack of clarity on a number of fundamental issues of revolutionary reforms led to grave drawbacks in the activities of the Commune. The experience of the Commune served as a most important lesson for the international proletariat and was used in subsequent revolutions, including the October 1917 revolution in Russia, ensuring the victory of the working class

in the struggle for power. What are these lessons?

The Communards let the bourgeois government flee from Paris to Versailles, a suburb of the French capital, and took no effective measures to nip in the bud the source of counter-revolution in Versailles. Marx wrote later: "They missed their opportunity because of moral scruples. They did not want to start a civil war, as if that mischievous dwarf Thiers had not already started the civil war with his attempt to disarm Paris!"<sup>1</sup> Availing themselves of this happy opportunity, the bourgeois reactionaries reinforced their troops and at an appropriate time launched a severe offensive against revolutionary Paris. The experience of the Paris Communards reminds all revolutionaries that counter-revolution must be fought promptly, resolutely and relentlessly from the very start.

The Paris revolutionaries held the elections to the Commune and dismissed the provisional revolutionary government too early. Marx commented: "The Central Committee surrendered its power too soon, to make way for the Commune. Again from a too 'honourable' scrupulosity!"<sup>2</sup>

It is of no small importance today that this lesson of the Commune be taken duly into account. Whenever Communists are in a government, all enemies of working-class power demand that elections be held urgently in the hope that the voters, still under the backlog of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois influence, will ensure the majority of the champions of the capitalist system in legislative bodies. The bourgeoisie, well aware of the extent of its influence among the masses, reduces the whole issue of democracy to elections, ignoring the main aspect of democracy—equal participation of the working people in exercising power. And when Communists raise this issue, they are branded "enemies of democracy". The experience of the Commune tells us that any concession to the bourgeoisie in the question of democracy and its real meaning may benefit the enemies of revolution.

The Commune, with so diverse political trends represented in it, found it rather hard to pursue a single and firm policy. To illustrate: the Commune, yielding to the demand of the Proudhonists, did not confiscate the wealth of the National Bank. Pressed hard for money, it took from the bank only 15 million francs (out of 3,000 million). Meanwhile the counter-revolutionaries took huge sums from the bank to finance their fight against revolutionary Paris. This lesson of the Commune was taken into account later by the fighters

<sup>1</sup>"Marx to Ludwig Kugelmann in Hanover; London, April 12, 1871", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 247.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



against the power of capital. During the socialist revolutions in Russia and in the countries of people's democracy, the Communists demanded an immediate and resolute nationalisation of the key sections of the economy, thus leaving the bourgeoisie no material sources for maintaining its dominance.

The Paris Communards failed to establish contacts with the peasants and with the population of other cities in France. For a long time the military command of the Commune employed the tactics of passive defence. The Communards were not resolute enough in fighting against counter-revolutionaries. All this weakened the fighting ability of the Commune. These important lessons have been taken into account by communist parties in their strategy and tactics. The study of this aspect of the Commune's experience highlights the need to promote a policy of the broadest possible alliances of the working class with the non-proletarian sections of the population. It shows also that the revolutionary forces should launch a resolute offensive at a crucial moment and be firm in suppressing the resistance of counter-revolution.

On May 21, the counter-revolutionary troops, supported by the German army stationed near Paris, broke the Communards' defences, and a week later recaptured the whole city. The reactionaries dealt with the defenders of the Paris Commune with utmost cruelty. From 30 to 40 thousand Communards were shot without trial. Women and children were not spared. The adverse internal and external conditions at the time the Commune emerged, the ideological and organisational weakness of the proletariat, the lack of its alliance with the peasantry, and also mistakes in the activities of the Communards caused the defeat of that first dictatorship of the proletariat.

Though Marx and Engels warned that a rising would be premature, they and the First International supported the proletarian revolution in France when it started. Eugene Varlin, Leo Frankel, Yelizaveta Dmitrieva and others occupied key positions in the Commune and took an active part in all its measures. Many lost their lives at the barricades. The leaders of the world proletariat regarded the Paris Commune as a spiritual off-spring of the International and devoted all their energies and experience to the cause of the Communards. Marx followed closely the development of the revolution. At the sittings of the General Council Marx and Engels discussed the significance of the Paris Commune.

They managed to overcome the difficulties in making contact with Paris encircled by a blockade, and helped the Communards by advice, analysing their mistakes. Marx sent letters to every part of the world, stressing the need to

render every support to the Commune. In a letter to Frankel and Varlin, he warned the Commune about the collusion of the French reactionaries with Prussians who planned to suppress the Commune.<sup>1</sup>

Marx and Engels helped the ideas of the Commune spread among the workers of various countries despite the slander published in the bourgeois press. August Bebel, leader of the German Social Democrats elected to the German Reichstag, spoke at the assembly in defence of the Commune: "It is most certain that the entire European proletariat and all who cherish freedom and independence look to Paris. And even if Paris has at this moment been quelled, let me remind you that the struggle in Paris is just a little outpost clash." He was charged with treason and jailed for this statement. British Republicans and Algerian democrats, too, came out in support of the Commune. Revolutionaries from Russia, Poland, Hungary, Italy and Belgium fought on its barricades.

The experience of the Commune was thoroughly studied by Marx, Engels and Lenin. Shortly after those revolutionary events Marx wrote one of the most brilliant works of scientific communism, *The Civil War in France*, published in London in June 1871, in which he developed further the theory of class struggle, revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin made an in-depth analysis of the Commune, in particular in *The State and Revolution*. The experience of the Paris Commune, summed up in the works of the founders of Marxism-Leninism, was a major contribution to the revolutionary theory of the international proletariat.

#### *The Historic Significance of the Commune*

The first working-class power in history did not last long, because all the necessary objective and subjective preconditions for carrying the revolutionary rising further did not yet exist. Two conditions, at least, were necessary for a complete victory, Lenin pointed out. These were highly developed productive forces and a proletariat adequately prepared for it.<sup>2</sup> There were no such conditions in France in 1871. That was the source of the weaknesses and mistakes of the Commune and that caused its ultimate defeat.

Still, the historic significance of the Paris Commune is immense: it confirmed the correctness of the Marxist doctrine of the revolutionary mission of the working class and the inevitability of its becoming the ruling class by winning

<sup>1</sup>See Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup>See V.I. Lenin, "In Memory of the Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, 1974, p. 141.

political power. The Commune demonstrated many of the main laws governing the development of a proletarian revolution. Most important, it determined the ways and methods of deciding the main question of the socialist revolution—the question of state power: Marx' doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat was carried from the realm of theory to revolutionary practice and was tested in a revolution.

The Paris Commune proved in practice that the proletarian state should be of a new type and serve not the oppressors but the popular masses freed from capitalist exploitation.

The failure of the Paris Commune once again confirmed the conclusion, made by Marx on the basis of his study of the 1848 revolution, that for the revolutionary struggle to be victorious there should be a sound alliance of the workers and peasants.

The Paris Commune showed that the working class could combine revolutionary patriotism with proletarian internationalism. The policy of the Commune was at once truly national and profoundly international. The Commune renounced militarism and wars of aggression and called on the working people to build a world social republic.

A very important conclusion prompted by the reforms of the Paris Commune, and also by its mistakes, was that the working class should have an independent revolutionary political party capable of guiding its struggle towards victory.

The right and "left" opportunists went out of their way to misinterpret the history of the Paris Commune. The right-wing revisionists allege that it was a chance event, a spontaneous rebellion which slowed down the development of the working-class movement in France. The "left"-wing opportunists absolutise the armed forms of struggle and see the only merit of the Paris Commune in that the Communards waged an armed struggle against the reactionary bourgeoisie, ignoring the fact that the civil war was imposed on the Paris workers by the bourgeoisie.

The cause of the Paris Commune is sacred to all Communists. Lenin said, "It lives to the present day in every one of us... The cause of the Commune is the cause of the social revolution, the cause of the complete political and economic emancipation of the toilers. It is the cause of the proletariat of the whole world. And in this sense it is immortal."<sup>1</sup>

All progressives in the world today again stress its unfading significance, noting the outstanding role of the Commune in world history and analysing its main lessons. "The

first lesson," wrote Jacques Duclos, an outstanding figure in the French Communist Party and the international communist movement, "which the working class should learn from the experience of the Paris Commune is that the existence and development of a party inspired by the principles of Marxism-Leninism, a party that is capable of bringing the doctrine of Marx, Engels and Lenin to the working class, to the broad popular masses, should be ensured everywhere."<sup>1</sup>

The lessons of the Commune, such as the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the fraternal solidarity of the workers of all countries, the alliance of the proletariat with the other working people, the peasantry and the urban middle strata of the population, inadmissibility of opportunist vacillations, and determination and consistency in fighting against counter-revolution are as significant today as in the past. The study of the experience of the Commune helped to rally the communist movement on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

##### 5. A Shorter Way to Socialism

As they studied the prerequisites for a socialist revolution and the conditions of its victory in capitalist countries, Marx and Engels could not, naturally, overlook such an important question as the prospects of transition to socialism in the countries where the conditions for that were not ripe yet. The immense theoretical and practical significance of this question was that it concerned social progress of a vast majority of the world population, of the peoples which had not yet entered the path of capitalist development or were just at the outset of it.

Drawing on the experience of Western Europe, the International leaders saw what misfortunes capitalism brought to the working people and the high price the peoples had to pay for the maturing of conditions within the capitalist system, conditions required for the socialist remaking of society. Engels noted in this connection that transition "to capitalist industrialism cannot take place without terrible dislocation of society, without the disappearance of whole classes and their transformation into other classes; and what enormous suffering, and waste of human lives and productive forces that necessarily implies, we have seen—

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "In Memory of the Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 143.

<sup>1</sup>Jacques Duclos, *A l'assaut du ciel La Commune de Paris annonciatrice d'un monde nouveau*, Editions Sociales, Paris, 1961, pp. 330-31.



on a smaller scale—in Western Europe”.<sup>1</sup>

Should other nations, too, inevitably pass along this road? This question was of concern to Marx and Engels not only in humanistic terms. It was a matter of great practical importance, because the revolutionary movement was gaining momentum in a big country like Russia. What would that revolution lead to? “Has Russia been compelled like the West to pass through the long incubation period of developing machine production in order to obtain machines, steamboats, railways, etc.?”<sup>2</sup>

Marx and Engels arrived at an important revolutionary conclusion: development towards socialism, by-passing capitalism, is possible. They substantiated the “theoretical possibility”<sup>3</sup> of transition of nations to socialism, “leaping over the entire capitalist period”,<sup>4</sup> “without experiencing the tortures of this regime”,<sup>5</sup> or (which concerns the countries which have just managed to make a start on capitalist production) “considerably shortening their advance to socialist society and largely sparing themselves the sufferings and the struggles through which we in Western Europe have to make our way”.<sup>6</sup>

What had led them to this conclusion?

Since the countries in question had not yet reached the capitalist stage, that is, they were peasant nations, Marx and Engels paid attention to the really existing precondition like communal land ownership, the village commune. Could it serve as a starting point for a popular movement which, skipping entirely the capitalist period, would at once transform Russian peasant communism into a modern socialist common property in all the means of production, enriching it with all the technical achievements of the capitalist era?

Marx and Engels believed that it could. They called the commune “peasant communism” because in the common property in land it had the basis of collective appropriation. They thought the commune could develop “directly as an ele-

ment of collective production on a national scale”.<sup>1</sup> They believed it was possible to advance towards socialism by-passing capitalism by using the commune, because “a transition to a higher form will be effected without the Russian peasants going through the intermediate stage of bourgeois small-scale primitive ownership”.<sup>2</sup>

Summing up their ideas, they arrived at the conclusion that the commune could become a starting point of an economic system to which modern society gravitated and so begin a new life, and that the peoples which had not reached the capitalist stage “will be able to use these relics of communal ownership and the corresponding popular customs as a powerful means of considerably shortening their advance to socialist society”.<sup>3</sup> Such was the internal possibility of non-capitalist development.

The external possibility, according to Marx and Engels, was a new “historical milieu” in which the village commune found itself: “its historical milieu is the simultaneous existence of capitalist production”.<sup>4</sup> The founders of Marxism stressed: “It is precisely the fact that it exists at the same time as capitalist production which enables it to take advantage of all the positive achievements of the latter without passing through all its dreadful vicissitudes.”<sup>5</sup> In their opinion that historical milieu by the very fact of its existence offered the commune real opportunities for joint work on a nationwide scale. It could therefore make use of all the positive gains made by the capitalist system, such as machines, technical achievements, etc.

But a popular revolution in Russia and a socialist revolution in Western Europe were to become a necessary condition for making these possibilities a reality. “If a revolution takes place in due time and if it concentrates all its strength on ensuring a free development of the village commune, the latter will soon become an element of the revival of Russian society.”<sup>6</sup>

Marx and Engels believed that the imminent revolution in

<sup>1</sup>“Engels to Nikolai Frantsevich Danielson in St. Petersburg; London, October 17, 1893”, in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 438.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Marx, “First Draft of the Reply to V.I. Zasulich’s Letter”, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Three, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Frederick Engels, “On Social Relations in Russia”, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Two, p. 401.

<sup>5</sup>“Marx to the Editorial Board of the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, London November 1877”, in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 292.

<sup>6</sup>Frederick Engels, “On Social Relations in Russia”, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Two, p. 403.

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx, “First Draft of the Reply to V.I. Zasulich’s Letter”, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Three, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup>Friedrich Engels, “Fluchtlingliteratur”, in Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 18, p. 565.

<sup>3</sup>Frederick Engels, “On Social Relations in Russia”, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Three, p. 403.

<sup>4</sup>Karl Marx, “Brief an V.I. Sassulitsch. Dritter Entwurf”, in Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 19, 1974, p. 405.

<sup>5</sup>Karl Marx, “First Draft of the Reply to V.I. Zasulich’s Letter”, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Three, p. 153.

<sup>6</sup>Karl Marx, “Brief an V.I. Zassulitsch. Erster Entwurf”, in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 19, p. 395.

Russia would fulfil not only its national but also international mission: "The Russian revolution will also give a fresh impulse to the labour movement in the West."<sup>1</sup> This is how Engels explained this idea in 1877: "Tsarism's overthrow appeared to be imminent; a revolution in Russia was to deprive all European reaction of its most solid support, its great reserve army, thereby giving the political movement in the West another powerful impetus, while creating much more favourable conditions for its struggle."<sup>2</sup>

The classics of Marxism made a most important conclusion that revolutions in Russia and in the West would influence, complement and strengthen each other. They believed that development towards socialism, by-passing the capitalist stage, would be successful "if the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other".<sup>3</sup> Marx and Engels considered this idea of mutual support very important and formulated this proposition in the Preface to the Russian Edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

The significance of this idea is broader than that of the concept of non-capitalist development. The idea is that advancement towards building a socialist society would be most real if it begins simultaneously with the victory of a socialist revolution and a popular revolution, if they would complement and strengthen each other. In other words, socialism can be built not only along one path accessible only to the working people in capitalist countries but along two ways, depending on the level of social and economic maturity in a country—the way of building the foundations of socialism opened by a proletarian revolution, and a shorter way to socialism, by-passing capitalism, opened by the "popular movement", by a popular revolution, "but an inevitable condition of this is the example and active support of the hitherto capitalist West".<sup>4</sup>

Marx and Engels set forth the significance of this preliminary condition and wrote that a socialist reorganisation in capitalist countries "will have such colossal power and provide such an example that the semi-civilised countries will automatically follow in their wake; they will be pushed in that direction even by economic needs alone".<sup>5</sup> They stressed:

<sup>1</sup>Frederick Engels, "On Social Relations in Russia", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Two, p. 407.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 410.

<sup>3</sup>Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. One, 1977, p. 100.

<sup>4</sup>Frederick Engels, "On Social Relations in Russia", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Two, p. 403.

<sup>5</sup>"Engels to Karl Kautsky in Vienna; London, September 12, 1882", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 331.

"Only when the retarded countries have seen from their example 'how it's done', how the productive forces of modern industry are made to work as social property for society as a whole—only then will the retarded countries be able to start on this abbreviated process of development."<sup>1</sup>

The concept of a shorter way to socialism, even of skipping the entire capitalist period, was not a simplified approach to this complex problem. Marx and Engels were aware that this would be a lengthy process consisting of many social and political stages.

They did not doubt that the victorious socialist revolution would render effective material assistance to the peoples striving to reach socialism by-passing the capitalist stage, and they saw the main thing in the power of the example of the victorious proletariat. This was due to their confidence in the vast potential strength of the peoples which can, as their revolutionary process develops, display resolve and historical independence and be prepared to go along the non-capitalist, shorter way of development towards socialism. The ideologists of the proletariat were alone even among the most progressive persons of that time to regard the peoples which had not reached the capitalist stage as equal subjects of historical development capable of finding the necessary stages of transition to socialism independently, taking into consideration the experience of the victorious proletariat. Therefore, they thought it unnecessary to advance any useless hypotheses about the social and political phases these peoples would have to go through before they would reach the socialist stage. Warning against possible paternalism as a result of underestimating the capability of these peoples to follow the socialist example, the founders of Marxism declared firmly: "One thing alone is certain: the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing."<sup>2</sup>

Summing up their conception of a shorter way to socialism, taking Russia as an example, Marx and Engels concluded that "this applies not only to Russia but to all countries at the pre-capitalist stage of development".<sup>3</sup>

This conception means that it is possible for the peoples of both capitalist and non-capitalist countries to advance towards socialism if they are united and coordinate their actions and if the revolutionary processes in them develop simultaneously.

<sup>1</sup>Frederick Engels, "On Social Relations in Russia", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Two, pp. 403-04.

<sup>2</sup>"Engels to Karl Kautsky in Vienna; London, September 12, 1882", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 331.

<sup>3</sup>Frederick Engels "On Social Relations in Russia", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Two, p. 404.



In fact, the alliance of proletarian and peasant nations, that is, the international alliance of the proletariat and peasantry, was seen as the sound basis for their advancement towards socialism. The leading role of the working class would be in that it would show "how it's done", offer a positive example of revolutionary and socialist reforms, and render material aid, helping in the use of machines, etc.

\* \* \*

The next most outstanding event in the activities of the International after the Paris Commune was the London Conference in 1871. Addressing the conference, Engels set forth the propositions of Marxism on the dictatorship of the proletariat and the proletarian party which "must be constituted... as an independent party with its own objective, its own politics".<sup>1</sup> Drawing on the experience of the Commune, he explained that there was only one way of reaching the goal of the Association of abolishing classes, and that was political rule by the proletariat. A widely known resolution "Political Action of the Working Class" openly proclaimed the principles of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and said that "constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to insure the triumph of the social Revolution and its ultimate end—the abolition of classes".<sup>2</sup>

The International's experience enriched the working-class movement by proving scientifically that a party is absolutely necessary for the movement. Leading the struggle against the joint force of the ruling classes, the proletariat can act effectively as a class only if it is organised as an independent political party opposed to the parties of the ruling classes.

"The First International," Lenin pointed out, "had played its historical part, and now made way for a period of a far greater development of the labour movement in all countries in the world, a period in which the movement grew in *scope* and *mass* socialist working-class parties in individual national states were formed."<sup>3</sup>

The First International had a worldwide historic importance for the liberation struggle of the proletariat. It marked a qualitative change in the proletarian struggle. The proletarian movement before had been divided ideologically

and politically and developed spontaneously. Due to the International, the content and forms of the international mass working-class movement changed cardinally. The transition from spontaneous to conscious and organised struggle marked a drastic turn towards a fusion of the proletarian mass movement with scientific socialism.

The International made the proletariat in various countries aware of its strength. It was largely due to the Association, which led the struggle of the international proletarian class, that this class emerged on a broad scale as an advanced force in the modern world, aware that the future belongs to it. As Engels put it, "the International dominated one side of European history—the side on which the future lies—for ten years".<sup>1</sup> This proletarian self-consciousness was clearly displayed in the Paris Commune, which was a remarkable result of the many-sided activities of the International. It is due to the organising work done by the International that the working-class movement for the first time acted as a powerful factor of social development. This explains why the reactionary classes launched reprisals on the member-organisations of the International. They felt the strength of the Association, which launched, as Wilhelm Liebknecht said, a spear of liberation struggle "into the very stronghold of capitalism".

Within the lifetime of the Association the working-class movement became genuinely international. The Association comprised working-class organisations of nearly all countries of Europe, of the United States, and a number of Latin American countries. Viewed in the international context, the activity of the Association was the beginning of the path which led the proletariat to its historic victories. "It is unforgettable, it will remain for ever in the history of the workers' struggle for their emancipation," Lenin said.<sup>2</sup>

Yet another achievement of the International was that under the leadership of Marx and Engels a nucleus of proletarian leaders, organisers, theoreticians, propagandists, publicists and public speakers of the working class was taking shape in the main areas of proletarian struggle; many of them subsequently became outstanding proletarian leaders of the mass socialist movement. In that galaxy of proletarian leaders who brought the ideas of scientific socialism into the broad masses of working people were August Bebel, Johann Becker, Eugene Dupont, Leo Frankel, Friedrich Sorge, Paul Lafargue, Friedrich Lessner, Wilhelm Liebknecht and other labour spokesmen from various countries.

<sup>1</sup>Frederick Engels "On the Political Action of the Working Class", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 417.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Resolutions of the Conference of Delegates of the International Working Men's Association", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 427.

<sup>3</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Karl Marx", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 49.

<sup>1</sup>"Engels to Friedrich Adolph Sorge in Hoboken; London, September 12 (17), 1874", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Speeches on Gramophone Records", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 240.

To the founders of scientific communism the practical leadership of the Association was a source of a more profound development of theory. The theoretical genius of Marx and Engels plus their titanic organising work and the development of the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary proletarian movement placed the Marxist theory on a higher level to meet the requirements of the epoch.

"What Marx, the man of science and the defender of the working class, achieved does not need to be engraved on tables of bronze or celebrated in words of fire. No monument of metal or stone proclaims it, but the countless multitudes of the proletariat in all countries and all parts of the world feel it and know it, and prove it by the growth of their fighting ranks under the immortal slogan given them by Marx: 'Proletarians of all countries, unite!'"<sup>1</sup> This is how Friedrich Sorge, a veteran of the working-class movement, assessed the significance of Marx for the cause of the revolutionary working class.

The Association did much to band together the proletariat of various countries, guiding the activities of its national contingents towards a common goal. Definite organisational limits of the international proletarian association were of a positive significance at that time. Though those limits became unnecessary as the movement kept growing, the principle of international solidarity fully retained its significance. It was effectively displayed also in the common line of the international proletarian movement. Another important achievement of the International was that it developed practical ties among workers in various countries, introduced joint discussions and established the principle of strict adherence to the jointly charted course. In united action it saw a sure way to ideological unity. Owing to the International the principles of proletarian internationalism became a source of strength and invincibility for the international revolutionary working-class movement.

Continuous close links among the socialist labour parties of various countries proved that the awareness of the common interests and solidarity of the proletariat of all countries, awakened by the International, can exist even if an international association is not really formed. This was an important lesson for the revolutionary socialist movement at that time and also for the subsequent struggle by the working people, in particular, at the time when the Third, Communist International was being disbanded in 1943 in quite different conditions.

The chief task accomplished by the Association was, ac-

cording to Lenin's well known assessment, that it "laid the foundation of an international organisation of the workers for the preparation of their revolutionary attack on capital..., the foundation of the proletarian international struggle for socialism".<sup>1</sup> The International was to lay such a foundation, which it did, enabling the international proletariat gradually, stage by stage, to build up enough strength for spreading the ideas of scientific communism worldwide, forming Marxist-Leninist parties, founding the first socialist state, accomplishing socialist and national liberation revolutions, creating a world socialist system, and providing conditions for new nations to go over to socialism. The foundation laid by the First International proved so strong that no actions by world imperialism, anti-communism, bourgeois nationalism and opportunism have been able to subvert the international cause of the proletariat.

<sup>1</sup>*Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 196.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Third International and Its Place in History", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 306, 307.



## Chapter Four

### *The Second International.*

### *The Struggle Against Opportunism*

In the years between the Paris Commune and the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia the international working-class and communist movement gained useful experience, accomplishing new tasks of struggle in the new historical conditions. That was the time when capitalism was reaching the monopoly stage, growing into imperialism (from the late 19th century to the early 20th century). The developments of that epoch left a deep imprint on the entire working-class movement at that time and gave rise to different, at times controversial, trends in its general development and in its national and international organisations.

The last decades of the 19th century saw a fast development of capitalism and a considerable growth of industrial output. The world industrial output was growing by 40 to 50 per cent every decade. As production was expanding in scope, capital was becoming ever more concentrated and centralised, and monopolies were cropping up on a large scale. Simultaneously, the colonial expansion of the major imperialist powers sharply increased.

Rapid industrial growth was accompanied by a swift growth of the working class. Whereas in the 1880s industrial workers totalled about 20 million worldwide, in 1900 their number topped the 30-million mark. The workers' movement was not limited to Western Europe and the United States, as it had been in the preceding period, but extended to East European countries, Russia, Latin America, Japan and Australia. That period saw an intensification of working-class action, labour parties and trade unions were springing up and growing fast.

The relatively peaceful development of capitalism, that is, absence of a revolutionary situation in the bigger capitalist countries, determined the main features of the working-class movement in the last 30 years of the century: its chief tasks were to form and strengthen labour parties, trade unions, co-operative and other organisations, use election campaigns and parliaments, and fight for democratic rights and freedoms, for the immediate needs of the workers and for reforms setting the stage for a new growth of the working-class movement.

By the late 1880s, independent political parties of the

working class (called for the most part socialist or social-democratic parties) operated in most countries. The first socialist party emerged in Germany as early as 1869. That was followed by the formation of socialist parties in Holland (1870), Denmark (1871), the United States (1876), France and Spain (1879), socialist groups in England (1880) and Russia (1883), and socialist parties in Norway (1887), Austria, Switzerland and Sweden (1889). Favourable conditions were provided for setting up labour parties in a number of other countries, where they emerged after the Second International was founded: in Finland and Australia such parties appeared in 1890, in Poland and Italy, in 1892, and in Bulgaria, Hungary and Chile, in 1894.

The independent parties of the working class were formed amidst severe struggles between the champions of the revolutionary, Marxist trend in the working-class movement and numerous non-Marxist (reformist, anarchist and other) trends.

Due to selfless efforts by the Marxists, most of the labour parties made the ideas of Marx and Engels, ideas of scientific socialism, the basis of their ideology and policy. That was a historic victory of Marxism in the international working-class movement. It spelled defeat for the anti-Marxist petty-bourgeois views and trends and signalled the start of a new stage in the working-class movement.

A major contribution to the dissemination and triumph of the ideas of scientific socialism at the beginning of that period was made by Marx and Engels. They were closely linked with the working class in many countries, corresponded with the leaders of labour organisations, and influenced the formation and growth of the working-class movement in various countries. Their advice, suggestions, criticism and also their constant and firm struggle against all kinds of anarchist and reformist views were immensely helpful for individual parties and organisations, and for the international working-class movement as a whole.

The successes scored by Marxists in their efforts to form revolutionary parties of the working class in the late 19th century and their experience remain topical in our day, too, above all in those newly-free countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America where workers' parties are just taking shape and an intensive struggle over their organisational and ideological principles is under way.

The important problem which increasingly attracted the attention of the founders of Marxism was the growth of the national liberation movement and the need for its alliance with the class struggle of the proletariat.

After the death of Karl Marx in 1883, Engels carried on a

ruthless struggle against any kinds of opportunism, dogmatism and sectarianism in labour parties, in the trade unions, and in cooperative and other organisations.

### *1. Formation of the Second International Marxists vs. Anarchists*

The objective conditions and the tasks confronting the working-class movement demanded broader cooperation among the labour parties and trade unions. Primarily because monopoly capital was growing, extending its influence far beyond national borders, there was a far greater need for the international unity of labour organisations in various countries, for their coordinated actions. That called for setting up a new international organisation of the working class.

For a few years after the disbandment of the First International, conditions were unfavourable for setting up a new international proletarian organisation. But as the class struggle was mounting, the labour organisations kept growing and, especially, new proletarian parties were taking shape, such conditions did appear.

Engels did a good job to prepare the setting up of such an association and to ensure the leading role of the Marxists at its First Congress. The new organisation, called the Second International, was organised on Marxist principles largely due to Engels and revolutionary socialists in various countries. The opportunists of England, France and some other countries failed in their attempt to take over the leadership of the international working-class movement.

The First Congress of the Second International opened on July 14, 1889 in Paris and was attended by 391 delegates from 20 countries. That was a truly international congress, the most representative one in the history of the world proletarian movement by that time. In the first years of the Second International, the main adversaries of Marxists were anarchists.

This is accounted for by the fact that due to the rapid growth of capitalism the ruined petty bourgeoisie was being drawn into industrial production and, joining the working class and its organisations, carried with it its inherent instability, ultra-revolutionary and spontaneous activity, and intolerance of organisation and statehood in any form. So, petty-bourgeois and anarchist elements found their way also to the organisations, especially the trade unions (they were called anarcho-syndicalists), which were members of the Second International.

The anarcho-syndicalists of the late 19th century adhered

to some of the views held by anarchists in the middle of that century (negation of any state, of political struggle, of a proletarian party, etc.). But they admitted that the working class was the decisive force in the struggle against capitalism and in their activities relied on the trade unions. The anarcho-syndicalists advocated "direct action"—acts of terrorism, sabotage, boycotts, etc. They considered an anarchist general economic strike to be the chief and decisive form of struggle by the working class and believed that such a strike could destroy the capitalist system. Their proclaimed goal was the emancipation of the working people. But they failed to see that the path to the elimination of capitalism and the emancipation of the working class lay through the winning of political power by the proletariat and establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The anarcho-syndicalists believed that the future society would be administered by trade unions and that the trade unions were the main organisation of the working class.

The tactics employed by the anarcho-syndicalists diverted the workers from developing the mass revolutionary movement and was used by reaction as a pretext for reprisals against the workers and their organisations. In a later period, Lenin, criticising anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, pointed out that they had rejected "petty work", that their tactics were to wait for "great days", and therefore they were unable "to muster the forces which create great events".<sup>1</sup> The anarchists advanced leftist slogans and tended to undertake venturesome acts. But all their actions failed, causing harm to the working-class movement. The lessons of their dismal experience must be learnt today, too. There still are adherents of anarchism and the extreme leftist tendencies in some countries, including developing ones, who by their actions cause a great deal of harm to the working-class and democratic movement.

The Marxists, led by Engels, came out resolutely against anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists. In the resolutions adopted at its congresses the Second International pointed out that the economic struggle and an organisation like trade unions were not enough to emancipate the working class. What was required for that was the growth of the political struggle to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and establish the working-class power instead, and, consequently, the formation of a political party of the proletariat.

The resolution adopted at the First Congress said that the emancipation of labour and of mankind could be achieved

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Differences in the European Labour Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, 1977, p. 349.



only through international efforts of the proletariat organised as a class, only after it had won political power to expropriate the means of production from the capitalist class and offer them for public ownership.

The Second Congress, held in 1891 in Brussels, stressed that class struggle was the main principle underlying the working-class movement, and the abolition of class domination was the indispensable condition for the emancipation of the working class.

The resolution on the political tactics of the Social Democrats, adopted at the Third Congress in 1893 in Zurich, said that political activity was a means of the emancipation of the proletariat. The Congress recommended all workers to fight for political rights and win political power in order to turn it from an instrument of domination into an instrument of the emancipation of the proletariat.

The congresses stressed the importance of fighting for the economic demands of the workers and for labour legislation. Contrary to assertions by the anarchists, who said legislation on labour protection was a bourgeois fancy, the congresses pointed out that that legislation was to protect the direct interests of the workers and help improve the conditions of their work.

The Marxists believed also that the struggle for labour legislation and for individual reforms under capitalism was not only an important means of improving the living conditions of working people, but also an instrument of increasing the political awareness of the workers, adding to their experience of class struggle, and drawing ever more working people into the working-class movement.

Of immense significance in this context was the decision made at the First Congress on holding demonstrations in all countries on May 1, 1890, demanding an 8-hour working day and voicing other demands on improving workers' conditions advanced by the congress. The May 1 resolution helped to build up the unity of actions by proletarians of various countries in the struggle for meeting their common interests, enhance the political awareness of the proletariat, making it better organised, and consolidate the international ties among the workers of the whole world. May 1 has been celebrated as the day of the international solidarity of the workers of all countries ever since. On that day they demonstrate their strength in the struggle against the rule of the bourgeoisie and capitalism.

At its first congresses the International paid great attention to ways of combating militarism and preventing wars. The resolution on disbanding standing armies and on arming the people, adopted by the Paris Congress of 1889, said

that wars were generated by capitalism and that they could be put an end to after the elimination of capitalism and the victory of the proletariat internationally. The congress urged the workers to fight for the disbandment of standing armies and called for national defence by the "people in arms", which would make it possible to end with wars of aggression and ensure peace—the primary and indispensable condition of any emancipation of workers. The congress thus linked the efforts to ensure peace with the struggle for socialism, taking up the tradition started by the First International.

Some congresses also discussed the colonial issue. Though the discussions of that matter were not broad and profound enough, they nevertheless enabled the Second International to formulate a number of important propositions. Colonial policy, it was pointed out at the congresses, is the product of capitalist development. The London Congress of 1896 denounced colonial policy and declared itself in favour of "the full autonomy of all nationalities".<sup>1</sup> The 1900 congress appealed to the workers of all countries, urging them to fight against colonial policy by all available means.

So, the decisions taken at the first congresses of the Second International formulated, on the whole, correctly the tasks to be accomplished by the working class. The theoretical and political positions of the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists were firmly rejected and they themselves were expelled from the Second International at the London Congress of 1896. The expulsion of anarchists from the International marked an important victory for the international working-class movement, facilitating the further growth of labour organisations and their vigorous struggle for the interests of the working people.

## 2. Social-Reformist Danger

Social-reformism presented an increasing danger to the parties of the Second International in the latter half of the 1890s. It was a product of the bourgeois influence on the working class at the time when pre-monopoly capitalism was growing into imperialism.

Lenin, analysing the causes of the spread of opportunism in the working-class movement, concluded that "opportunism is no chance occurrence, sin, slip, or treachery on the part

<sup>1</sup>Full Report of the Proceedings of the International Workers' Congress, London, July and August, 1896. Printed and Published by "The Labour Leader", Glasgow-London, 1896, p. 32.

of individuals, but a social product of an entire period of history,"<sup>1</sup> the epoch of imperialism.

An important social source of opportunism in the working-class movement was the constant inflow of the petty bourgeoisie into the proletariat. In the epoch of imperialism small owners are ruined especially rapidly due to the increasing concentration and growth of monopolies. The masses of ruined peasants and petty bourgeoisie join the working class, bringing along with them their own ideology and mentality. "It is quite natural," Lenin observed, "that the petty-bourgeois world-outlook should again and again crop up in the ranks of the broad workers' parties. It is quite natural that this should be so, right up to the changes of fortune that will take place in the proletarian revolution."<sup>2</sup>

Another social source of opportunism spreading in the working-class movement was the working-class elite. In the epoch of imperialism the bourgeoisie in the more industrialised countries began to derive superprofits from exploiting the working people in their countries and the colonies. With part of that profit it bribed the working-class upper crust to create so-called workers' aristocracy. The latter gave up the struggle and collaborated with the bourgeoisie.

A major and quite conservative part of the workers' aristocracy, a reliable mainstay of opportunism, was the so-called labour bureaucracy, i.e., leaders and functionaries of social-democratic parties and reformist trade unions, workers' representatives in local and central government bodies, etc. The bourgeoisie bribed them to use them as its agents in the working class.

These are the main causes of the spread of reformism and opportunism in the socialist parties and the trade unions, which in the long run brought about the collapse of the Second International.

Reformism in policy-making meant unprincipled adaptation of the working-class movement to capitalism and actual abandonment of revolutionary ideas, the ideas of proletarian revolution, and substitution of the struggle to win reforms and a partial improvement of workers' conditions under the political power of the bourgeoisie for a real struggle for socialism.

In the conditions when Marxism became the predominant ideology in the working-class movement, the reformists were compelled to style themselves as Marxists. They spoke not of rejecting Marxism but of "developing" and "correcting"

it, of "bringing it into line with the changing conditions". But in reality their goal was to revise Marxism, to replace its revolutionary essence by reformism. That is why we say that in those conditions reformism acted as revisionism. Already at that time the typical quality of reformists and revisionists became quite apparent: both passed themselves off as "innovators" in the working-class movement. Today, too, revisionists wear the "innovation" mask as they come out against Marxism-Leninism. Now, as before, the revisionists talk about a creative development of Marxism, but in reality reject its basic principles, the essence of its revolutionary theory and tactics and ultimately aim at "improving" capitalism, not at abolishing it.

Lenin's analysis of the origin and spread of right-wing opportunism in the parties of the Second International has lost none of its significance, helping one to see the causes of the wide spread of right-wing opportunism in the working-class movement in many of the advanced capitalist countries today.

There have occurred considerable changes in the struggle between the two trends in the working-class movement. In the period preceding World War I the opportunist trend temporarily prevailed in most of the parties of the Second International, whereas under the impact of the October Revolution there was an immense growth of the revolutionary trend in the movement, which was evidenced by the formation of communist parties. Now the revolutionary trend is winning ever bigger victories over the opportunist one, which is seen in the vast growth of the forces of socialism, the revolutionary working-class movement and the national liberation struggle.

At the end of the 19th century, those who preached reformist and revisionist views grew increasingly active in the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), the strongest and most influential party of the Second International. As opportunism was growing within the SPD, the Party's leaders distorted the main ideas of Engels on peaceful and non-peaceful ways of revolutionary struggle, which he had set forth in his last work, the famous "Introduction" to Marx' *Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850*. Engels had stressed that the development of weaponry created great difficulties for barricade battle in cities, which used to be a traditional method in revolutions. Those difficulties should be taken into account, he warned, and future battles should be thoroughly prepared for. But when the "Introduction" was published some important pieces were omitted from it, so one could think that in the new conditions Engels rejected the idea of armed struggle altogether. Thus the correct

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Collapse of the Second International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 247.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Marxism and Revisionism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 1977, p. 39.



balance of peaceful or legal and non-peaceful ways of struggle was totally upset in favour of the former. The "Introduction" thus changed was circulated in the subsequent years (until 1928) as a "political will of Engels" and was widely used by the opportunists for shaping reformist concepts and fighting against revolutionary Marxists.

The views of Eduard Bernstein, an outstanding figure in the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the father and theorist of right-wing revisionism, an opportunist trend in the working-class movement, was most dangerous to the Second International and the international working-class movement as a whole. Bernstein preached reformist ideas in as early as the 1880s, and after the death of Engels in 1895 he set to spreading anti-Marxist views with growing persistence. He revised the basic concepts of scientific socialism on the class struggle, the proletarian revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and others.

Bernstein presented a one-sided picture of the processes going on in capitalist countries, paying attention merely to the rapid and relatively calm development of capitalism in the late 19th century, to the spread of parliamentary democracy in some countries, the fast growth of labour organisations and their success in elections, to some improvement of the workers' living standards, above all, those of skilled workers, to certain rights won by workers with the help of bourgeois legislation, and so on. On that basis Bernstein made the conclusion that capitalism was gradually developing into socialism. In that case, class struggle, revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat were unnecessary. Socialism could therefore be achieved through some reforms and improvements, through class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. "The end is nothing, the movement is everything" was his well known dictum. He said the working class should give up the struggle for the ultimate goal, the victory of the socialist revolution, and limit itself to immediate demands.

Bernstein's views were censured by revolutionary Marxists. But the centrist elements which dominated in the SPD did not wish to part with Bernstein and expel him from the party. Therefore he and his supporters remained in the SPD, even though the party's congress held in 1899 in Hanover rejected Bernstein's views as revisionist. That left a possibility for disseminating his ideas among Social Democrats in Germany and elsewhere.

The right-wing opportunist tendencies within the Second International were spreading, and the Millerand case, among other things, proved this beyond doubt. Millerand, a French Socialist, accepted a ministerial post in a bourgeois government in 1899 without even consulting his party, and,

what made it still worse, that was a government which had among its members General Galliffet, a butcher of the Paris Commune.

The Millerand case was in the focus of attention at the Paris Congress of the Second International in 1900. The congress passed a compromise resolution suggested by Karl Kautsky. On the one hand, the resolution pointed out that the entry of a Socialist in a bourgeois government "cannot be regarded as the normal beginning for winning political power". On the other hand, it admitted that such entry was possible as "a temporary and exceptional makeshift in an emergency situation".<sup>1</sup> The resolution was vague about the conditions in which Socialists could enter a bourgeois government. Thus, having adopted the "indiarubber resolution", as it was called, the congress left the opportunists a chance to justify Millerand and the policy of ministerialism.

So, at the close of the 19th century serious weaknesses were revealed in the working-class movement and in the activities of the Second International. Most dangerous was that revisionist views and ideas were combatted insufficiently in a number of parties and in the Second International. In some of its resolutions the International made concessions to reformism, did not even mention the proletarian revolution or the dictatorship of the proletariat, and did not speak unequivocally of replacement of the bourgeois state machinery. A number of social-democratic leaders obviously overestimated parliamentary struggle and, conversely, under-rated extra-parliamentary action, and failed to determine a proper combination of the two. In particular, the general strike issue was not solved correctly. In that period the congresses of the International, having rejected the anarcho-syndicalist concept of the general strike as the main and even only means of abolishing capitalism, failed to produce a clear Marxist definition of the role of a mass political strike as an effective method of extra-parliamentary struggle.

Important questions like the agrarian issue, the attitude of the working class to various sections of the peasantry, and the alliance of the workers and peasants as the major condition of victory of a proletarian revolution, were inadequately considered by the Second International.

All these drawbacks and unsolved problems in the activities of the Second International and labour organisations provided a breeding ground for reformism in the working-class movement and later were among the factors that led to the

<sup>1</sup>R. Palme Dutt, *The Internationale*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1964, p. 102.

victory of opportunism in the social-democratic parties and to the collapse of the Second International.

### 3. Leninism—the Marxism of the New Historical Epoch

The start of the 20th century marked the entry of capitalism into a new, imperialist phase of its development. The transition to imperialism brought about cardinal changes in the economy, politics and social relations in the capitalist countries, as well as in international relations. The new phase in the development of capitalism was thoroughly analysed by Lenin in several works, specifically in his book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916).

Imperialism, Lenin said, is dying capitalism, the eve of the proletarian revolution; it intensifies all capitalist contradictions to the utmost and causes the strengthening of the revolutionary trend in the working-class movement. Thus, the stepped-up onslaught by the monopolies on democratic rights of the working people and on their living standards rendered all contradictions of bourgeois society still more acute and provided objective preconditions for the mounting struggle for socialism. Monopoly capital acted as the enemy of not only the working class, but of all other working sections of the population (peasants, craftsmen, small traders, white-collar workers and intellectuals). That offered good chances for expanding the front of the class forces coming out against monopoly domination, and for bringing those forces together under the leadership of the working class.

The increased exploitation and enslavement of colonial and dependent countries by monopoly powers led inexorably to the upsurge of the national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples. Not only the proletarians of the capitalist countries, but also the anti-imperialist forces of the colonial world rose against imperialism. That provided objective conditions for the alliance of the international working class with the national liberation movement. That was a new and even more significant expansion of the front of struggle against imperialism.

The advent of imperialism was accompanied by a rapid aggravation of contradictions among the major capitalist countries and inevitably caused wars among them. The imperialist wars added still more to the indigence and distress of the workers, provoking their increasing protest against the criminal policy pursued by bourgeois governments and their readiness to fight against capitalism and imperialist wars. At the same time imperialist wars inevitably weakened the positions of some capitalist countries. As the capitalist con-

traditions intensified, there appeared weak links in the chain of imperialism, which became most apparent during the wars.

Under imperialism, which intensified all contradictions of capitalism, the international working class was faced with the most important immediate task of preparing and accomplishing proletarian revolutions. The period of a relatively "peaceful" development of capitalism and the working-class movement was drawing to a close, to be succeeded by the era of proletarian revolutions.

The coming of the imperialist stage of capitalism, greater concentration of production and the growth of monopolies were accompanied by a rapid expansion of the working class and its concentration at large industrial enterprises. This offered better conditions for uniting the workers and mobilising them for the struggle. The labour parties and trade unions were growing everywhere.

In response to the intensified oppression by the monopolies the workers in Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Belgium and other countries launched a massive strike movement. During the strikes in the early 20th century there emerged a new form of the working-class struggle, the mass political strike. The left forces became more active in the labour organisations of Germany, France, Bulgaria and other countries, a sign that the revolutionary trend in the international working-class movement had grown stronger.

The revolutionary movement was gaining strength most rapidly in Russia, which was becoming the vanguard of the revolutionary forces of the world. The centre of the international revolutionary movement shifted to Russia, at that time a concentration of all contradictions of capitalism and the weakest link in the imperialist chain.

The new epoch demanded from the working class and its parties a new strategy and tactics of struggle, different from what had been advocated by the Second International when the proletarian revolution was not yet directly on the agenda. But the leaders of the Second International failed to see the specifics of the new epoch and the new tasks it posed. Trapped in reformist views, they proved unable to lead the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie for the victory of the proletarian revolution.

Lenin accomplished the historic task of developing revolutionary theory, strategy and tactics of the international working-class movement. This was what we today rightly call Marxism-Leninism.

So what distinguished Leninism, and why was revolutionary theory given Lenin's name next to the name of Marx?

First, Lenin not just defended Marxism from all attempts



by opportunists to distort its meaning. His greatest achievement is that he developed the doctrine of Marx and on its basis arrived at most important new conclusions, that he enriched every aspect of the revolutionary theory, enhancing it to a qualitatively new stage.

Second, Lenin was a true innovator of revolutionary theory and practice. He saw well that the revolutionary theory of the proletariat was not a dogma, but was constantly developing, being enriched by the experience of class struggle and taking due account of the new historical conditions of social development. While opportunists, referring to the new conditions, were "developing" Marxism by stripping it of revolutionary content, of its essence, Lenin, when he was developing proletarian theory, remained fully on the positions of Marxism, adhering to its revolutionary principles and drawing on its revolutionary method.

Well aware of the new historical conditions in which capitalism was growing ripe for the socialist revolution, Lenin concentrated primarily on the questions of theory which had been given prominence by life. Whereas Marx and Engels focused mostly on proving that the revolutionary transition of society from capitalism to socialism was objectively inevitable, Lenin pointed out the ways and forms of carrying out a socialist revolution, setting forth the role of the subjective factor of the revolution, and elaborated and carried into effect the doctrine on the party, defining the party as the leading and organising force in the socialist revolution and the remoulding of society along socialist lines.

Third, Leninism emerged as a revolutionary doctrine of the international proletariat based on the experience accumulated in the class struggle of the workers of all countries. Just like Marx and Engels, Lenin verified his conclusions in practice, adding new ones as more practical experience was gained. As he developed revolutionary theory, Lenin proceeded not only from the conditions and needs of social development in Russia, but from the international conditions and from the historic tasks confronting mankind on its way from capitalism to socialism. Leninism is a doctrine of the international working class.

Fourth, Lenin elaborated not just on some question, or even one aspect of revolutionary proletarian ideology, but on all its components—philosophy, political economy and scientific socialism. In philosophy his outstanding contribution is his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* written in 1908. In that work he made an in-depth analysis of the new achievements of natural sciences and developed the basic principles of Marxist philosophy, especially the theory of knowledge (including the theory of reflection, the doctrine on objective

truth, definition of matter, space and time, casuality, etc.). In his *Philosophical Notebooks* and other works Lenin developed further the doctrine on materialistic dialectics, the theory of historical materialism, the doctrine on classes and class struggle, and on the state and revolution (in his *The State and Revolution*).

In political economy Lenin further developed Marx' theory of capitalism in general and with regard to the conditions in Russia in particular (*The Development of Capitalism in Russia*), and elaborated the agrarian question. But his greatest merit was that he created the scientific theory of imperialism (*Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*). Lenin contributed to the development of the political economy of socialism and communism, notably by formulating the main regularities and ways of building socialism and communism.

He made an outstanding contribution to the theory of scientific socialism. Drawing on the analysis of the essence and specifics of the new imperialist epoch, Lenin developed the theory of socialist revolution. He arrived at the most important conclusion that in the epoch of imperialism the socialist revolution could not win in all capitalist countries simultaneously, that first it could win only in several countries, or even in one country. He made that conclusion on the basis of his discoveries concerning the operation of the law of the uneven development of capitalism in the epoch of imperialism.

Contrary to the views of the leaders of the Second International, who believed that the socialist revolution could be accomplished only in highly developed capitalist countries where the working class made up the majority of the population, Lenin proved that when the entire system of imperialism would grow ripe for a revolution, a socialist revolution would take place where the contradictions would be more acute, where the power of the bourgeoisie would be weaker, but where the working class would enjoy the powerful support of the other working masses, the peasants above all. In other words, a revolution can be accomplished also in less developed or in medium-developed capitalist countries. Aware of this, Lenin attached great importance to the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, seeing it as the chief motive force of the socialist revolution.

Lenin developed Marx' ideas of an uninterrupted (permanent)<sup>1</sup> revolution, which had been consigned to oblivion by the leaders of the Second International. Arguing with the opportunists who said there should be a lengthy period

<sup>1</sup>The term "permanent revolution" was widely used by Leon Trotsky to falsify the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the socialist revolution.

of capitalist development between bourgeois and proletarian revolutions, Lenin elaborated the theory of a bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into a socialist one. He proved that in the epoch of imperialism a bourgeois-democratic revolution can and must grow into a socialist revolution in countries like Russia.<sup>1</sup>

Whether a bourgeois-democratic revolution would grow into a socialist one or not, Lenin said, depended above all on the proletariat's ability to lead a revolution, to rally round itself broad masses of working people, the peasants in the first place, and to impart a broad and profound character to the bourgeois-democratic revolution. So the hegemony of the proletariat is the main question of the revolution.

Lenin contributed a great deal to analysing the proportion between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism. He showed that democracy even in most democratic capitalist countries was bourgeois democracy serving the bourgeoisie, limiting the rights of the working people and used against the working people. But, he said, the proletariat should, nonetheless, defend this democracy, for only then will it be able freely to develop its class struggle.

Yet another great achievement of Lenin is that he developed the doctrine on the dictatorship of the proletariat as a new and highest type of democracy—the democracy of the working people. Unless the dictatorship of the proletariat is established, he taught, it would be impossible to abolish the rule of the bourgeoisie and capitalism, to accomplish a socialist revolution and build a socialist society.

He proved theoretically that a proletarian party of a new type must be formed, and he did form such a party, without which neither a proletarian revolution can be accomplished, nor socialism can be built. The opportunists in the Second International were gradually turning the social-democratic parties into harmless amorphous organisations having no clear revolutionary programmes, no strict discipline, and including opportunist elements among their members. Lenin came out to challenge them and created a party on truly revolutionary principles.

A revolutionary party of the working class, Lenin used to say, is strong in its ideological and organisational unity, strict party discipline, close ties with the popular masses, a political line elaborated and pursued through joint efforts, intolerance to all kinds of opportunism, and a creative approach to theory, strategy and tactics of the working-class movement.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Social-Democracy's Attitude Towards the Peasant Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, 1965, pp. 236-37.

Lenin attached great importance to the national liberation movement in colonial and dependent countries. He showed that the struggle carried on by the peoples in these countries against imperialism and colonialism was of great revolutionary significance and merged with the struggle of the world proletariat into one anti-imperialist stream. The task of the working class was to help step up the liberation struggle in the colonies, build up the alliance of the working-class and national liberation movements, and use the vast potentials of the national liberation movement to end imperialist domination.

The elaboration by Lenin of the theory, strategy and tactics of the revolutionary movement in the new historical conditions was most important for the international revolutionary and communist movement, for effecting in practice the transition from capitalism to socialism.

Lenin's ideas, today as before, constitute the ideological and theoretical basis of all truly revolutionary parties and organisations fighting for peace, democracy and socialism.

The emergence of the Bolshevik Party in Russia in 1903, the workers' party of a new type, a party of the proletarian revolution, which was formed under Lenin's leadership, proved to be of worldwide historic significance.

The Bolshevik Party differed in principle from the parties of the Second International which were incapable of revolutionary action. The specific features of a new type of party, which were present in it since its inception and matured during its subsequent development, are as follows.

The Party is guided in its activities by Marxist-Leninist theory, which it develops creatively, ensuring the unity of revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice;

it is a collective political leader of the working class, a highest form of its organisation, the vanguard of all working people; its closest ties with the popular masses are a source of its inexhaustible strength;

its activities are based on principles of democratic centralism; the Party relentlessly builds up the ideological and organisational unity of its ranks, maintains discipline among its members and encourages their activity;

it is intolerable to any kind of factionalism and to revisionism, opportunism and dogmatism;

it analyses in a critical way the results of its revolutionary work, the results of its policy, and constantly studies and uses the experience accumulated by the international communist movement;

it consistently applies the principles of proletarian internationalism in its activities.

The Bolshevik Party, equipped with the theory of Marxism-



Leninism, headed the liberation struggle of the proletariat and its allies in the three Russian revolutions and led the working masses to victory. The Great October Socialist Revolution marked a cardinal turn in the destiny of mankind and ushered in a new era—the era of transition from capitalism to socialism.

It is often said in some countries that the term “the new type of party” had grown outdated. Sometimes it is asserted that what is needed now is not a Leninist party but a “new party open wide for the masses”. But all these concepts in fact boil down to a rejection of a clear-cut class approach, a rejection of the Marxist-Leninist ideological basis and proletarian internationalism.

Indeed, what would in this case remain of the communist parties? Recommendations like those mentioned above in fact call upon the parties to go backwards and become social-democratic parties of the old type. But these parties have gone a long way and proved by their experience that such recommendations would lead them neither to a revolution nor to socialism. For they offer no solution to the key problems confronting the toiling masses.

All the real victories for the working-class movement have been won since then precisely by Leninist parties, the new parties of scientific communism that differ basically from the parties of the social-democratic type.

Once they emerged, the new parties accumulated revolutionary experience, developing and improving their organisational forms, their practical and tactical guidelines. But they all remained, and still do, parties of a *new*, Marxist-Leninist type, parties carrying on the consistent struggle for the interests of the working class, of all working people.

#### *The 1905 Revolution in Russia*

The 1905 revolution in Russia gave a powerful impetus to the international working-class movement. It was the first popular revolution in the era of imperialism. By contrast with the bourgeois and bourgeois-democratic revolutions in the 18th and 19th centuries in the West, led by the bourgeoisie, the Russian revolution in 1905 was carried out by the toiling masses led by the working class. The Russian bourgeoisie feared the movement of the popular masses and the revolution and tended to collude with the autocracy and the landed aristocracy.

The revolutionary movement grew to especially wide proportions in October 1905, with the country swept by a general political strike started by the Moscow workers. The strikers

demanding the overthrow of the autocracy, a boycott of the legislative assembly (Duma), the convocation of a Constituent Assembly and establishment of a democratic republic.

The Soviets (councils) of Workers' Deputies, which were at the head of the strikes, were increasing in number. They set out to prepare an armed rising, thus becoming the germs of new power. Ignoring the institutions of the tsarist government, the Soviets issued decrees, instructions and orders, introduced an 8-hour working day without prior arrangement, and adopted democratic freedoms. The emergence of the Soviets was of worldwide significance. Later they became the basis for the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat. The revolution in Russia in October 1917 and the entire subsequent experience of the Soviet Union confirmed the vital power of Lenin's theory of the Soviets as the most popular bodies of genuine people's power, of genuine democracy.

As the revolution was gaining momentum, the workers, led by the Bolsheviks, came to realise that peaceful means alone was not enough to topple the autocracy. That could be done only in armed struggle. Preparations for an armed rising began all over Russia. In December 1905 political strikes staged by workers in many cities were growing into armed action. The armed uprising of the Moscow workers was the largest.

But because of the lack of experience in armed struggle, the shortage of weapons, the lack of concerted action, poor ties of the workers with soldiers, insufficient support by peasants, and for other reasons, the heroic uprising of the workers was defeated. Though the struggle continued into 1906, it brought no victory to the revolution.

However, the efforts and sacrifices of the workers and peasants were not in vain. Their courageous struggle sapped the strength of the autocratic regime and the landlords and gave the Russian and international labour movement new experience in class struggle. The 1905 revolution, Lenin said, was the dress rehearsal of the victorious October Socialist Revolution in 1917.

The 1905 Revolution gave a powerful impetus to the international labour movement, stimulating the growth of the class struggle. In many countries of Europe the working people launched mass actions as a token of solidarity with the workers and peasants of Russia. In some countries the workers staged massive political strikes. Politically conscious workers and the more progressive members of the social-democratic parties closely studied the experience and lessons of the 1905 revolution. The revolution bore out the correctness of the main propositions of Lenin and the Bol-

sheviks and demonstrated the fallacy of the strategy and tactics of the opportunists.

The revolution confirmed the correctness of Lenin's idea of the hegemony of the proletariat in a bourgeois-democratic revolution: the 1905 revolution, bourgeois-democratic in its goals, was proletarian in the leading role of the working class in it and the methods used in the struggle (strikes and the armed uprising). And it confirmed Lenin's ideas about a bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into a socialist one.

During the revolution it became most obvious that various forms and methods of struggle, peaceful and non-peaceful, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary, must be combined. It became apparent also that the workers can fight effectively only by using resolute, massive, extra-parliamentary methods.

The revolution revealed the vast revolutionary potential of the peasants and confirmed Lenin's idea that they must be drawn in the revolutionary struggle, and that a sound alliance of the workers and peasants is necessary for the victory of a revolution. This conclusion is applicable to this day in many countries where the peasants still make up a large portion of the population.

The experience of the 1905 Russian revolution showed that the going over of a part of the army onto the side of the revolution and alliance between workers and soldiers were not only necessary but possible. That requires a bold, vigorous and skilful work by members of the revolutionary workers' party among soldiers and sailors, bringing home to them the goals of the revolutionary struggle and freeing them from the influence of the reactionary ideology and policy of the ruling classes.

The 1905 revolution had a great impact on the national liberation movements. In some countries (Iran, Turkey, China and Mexico) bourgeois revolutions took place. In many parts of the world the national liberation struggle assumed greater proportions and was spreading at a higher pace.

Members of various trends in the Second International looked differently at the significance, experience and lessons of the Russian revolution. The left-wing Social Democrats (among them Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and others) ardently greeted the revolution and sought to spread its experience to other countries.

The right-wing opportunists, on the contrary, set out to belittle its significance, alleging that the forms and methods, above all the armed uprising, used in Russia could not be applied in the advanced countries of the West where the workers normally enjoyed suffrage and other democratic freedoms. They stubbornly vindicated reformist concepts,

advocating solely peaceful, legal and parliamentary struggle.

The 1905 revolution is of unfading historic significance. Under its powerful influence revolutionary actions by the working people greatly increased in capitalist and colonial countries. It shook the world capitalist system, the contradictions within that system deepened. The experience of the 1905 revolution gave new knowledge to the next generations of revolutionary fighters.

#### *4. Three Trends in the International Working-Class Movement*

The growing of capitalism into imperialism and the 1905 revolution in Russia made the struggle within the Second International and in its parties more acute. In those parties differentiation increased and three trends—right-wing opportunist, centrist and left-wing revolutionary—became ever more clearly pronounced.

The right-wing opportunists, as before, preached reformism and pushed the working-class movement towards giving up the class struggle and the proletarian revolution.

The centrists, led by Karl Kautsky, Jules Guesde, Otto Bauer and others, held key positions in the Second International. They took refuge in their "orthodoxy" and remained the most faithful Marxists—in words. Sometimes they did oppose revisionists and defended, again in words only, the principles of Marxism. But they never combatted revisionism seriously, either its theory or practice, and they did not wish to break with the opportunists in organisational terms, thereby bolstering the positions of sworn opportunists in the social-democratic parties, whether they wanted that or not. It is this conciliatory attitude of the centrists to the right-wingers that led, in the long run, to the victory of opportunism in the labour parties and trade unions and caused the collapse of the Second International. Though the rightists were defeated at the Amsterdam Congress in 1904 and their revisionist stance was officially censured by the International later, too, the right wing was growing ever stronger and more influential, and its views increasingly influenced the social-democratic parties and trade unions.

This aspect of the experience of the international working-class movement is most topical today, because now that the anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle has been mounting, any tolerance or a neutral attitude to right- or "left"-wing opportunism in the working-class and communist movement can be very harmful for the revolutionary movement.

The left wing in the International, headed by Lenin,



Luxemburg and Liebknecht, launched a vigorous struggle against the revisionists and against the reconciliation of the centrists with them. But the left were not strong and influential enough yet. Besides, even the best left-wingers in West European parties, as, for instance, Rosa Luxemburg, made mistakes on some questions related to the theory and practice of the working-class movement. They did not yet see the need to form new, truly revolutionary parties of the working class and to separate from the right-wingers not only ideologically but also organisationally. The principle of retaining the social-democratic parties united, even with opportunists in them, was considered immutable. Therefore the left remained with the right-wingers and centrists in the same parties as long as the Second International existed. That tied their hands, giving them no independence they needed, and made them captives of the centrists who prevailed in the parties.

The Bolsheviks led by Lenin carried on a consistent struggle against the opportunists in the Second International. By contrast with the parties of the Second International, the Bolsheviks not merely denounced revisionism but broke with the Russian revisionists organisationally. In the Second International the left positions were occupied also by the Serbian Social-Democratic Party and the Bulgarian Labour Social-Democratic Party (Tsesnyaki).

Due to the struggle waged by the left in the Second International, its congresses adopted a number of correct decisions in the first years of the 20th century, despite the efforts of the revisionists. Those decisions were of a positive significance for the international working-class movement. The Amsterdam Congress passed an important resolution on calling a general strike, which was a big victory for the left, for it stressed the importance of not only parliamentary struggle, which was ever more overestimated by the International leaders, but also extra-parliamentary working-class actions.

The discussion at the Stuttgart Congress in 1907 of inter-relationships between the social-democratic parties and the trade unions was of great significance as well. The growth of the working-class movement, the development of political and trade-union organisations of the working class, the intensification of the class struggle, with the tasks facing the working class becoming ever more complex—all that demanded that the working class be united, that its various organisations, above all its parties and trade unions, act together. But the efforts to build such unity were obstructed by the opportunists who, while preaching the "neutrality" of the trade unions, prevented the labour parties and the trade unions

from coming closer together, thus hampering their close co-operation and joint struggle.

The Bolsheviks, headed by Lenin, came out against the neutrality of the trade unions, for the closest contacts and joint actions of the labour parties and the trade unions, with the proletarian party playing the leading role. After a lengthy debate, the view that close cooperation between the socialist parties and the trade unions was necessary prevailed.

The Copenhagen Congress in 1910 concentrated on the role of cooperatives in the class struggle of the proletariat. After the debate the congress passed a resolution which, as Lenin said, "gave, in essentials, a correct definition of the tasks of the proletarian co-operative societies".<sup>1</sup> The resolution pointed out that the main purpose of the cooperatives was to facilitate the class struggle of the proletariat and help improve its living conditions. The congress warned against overestimating the role of the cooperatives and demanded that the Socialists be most active in the cooperative movement. It stressed that to establish contacts between cooperatives and the socialist parties was in the interest of the struggle waged by the working class against capital.

The Second International discussed also the national-colonial issue, which was among the main ones at the Stuttgart Congress of the International in 1907. At that congress a severe clash erupted between Marxists and revisionists. Van Kol, a Dutch revisionist, and some other opportunist delegates at the congress actually justified colonialism instead of strongly condemning it. The draft resolution submitted by the majority of the commission on the colonial issue admitted a possibility of pursuing a "socialist colonial policy".

The left-wing Socialists went strongly against such a policy of the revisionists. The congress adopted by a majority vote a resolution, which read: "The congress holds that the imperialist colonial policy in fact leads to the enslavement, forced labour and extermination of the indigenous population of the colonies. The civilising mission announced by capitalist society, is but a cover-up to disguise the rapacious drive for conquest and exploitation. Only socialist society will give all nations a possibility to use the benefits of civilisation." The adoption of such a resolution was the unquestioned victory for the left.

One of the main issues on the agenda of the congresses of the Second International held in the first years of this century was that of militarism and the menace of a world war:

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Question of Co-operative Societies at the International Socialist Congress in Copenhagen", *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 283.

the danger of wars among the major capitalist countries was growing. The struggle over the attitude to militarism and war grew most acute among the Social Democrats in various countries, which was most clearly manifest at the Stuttgart Congress at which 4 drafts of the resolution were submitted.

The left-wing Socialists, led by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, stood up firmly for a revolutionary, Marxist position. They fought vigorously for a resolution which not only would properly characterise militarism and the danger of war under imperialism, but would also teach the working class in all countries concrete revolutionary tactics of struggle against militarism and war. That goal was attained due to the amendments made by Lenin and Luxemburg in the draft resolution tabled by August Bebel. The amendments said, in particular: "If a war threatens to break out, it is the duty of the working class and of its parliamentary representatives in the countries involved to exert every effort to prevent the outbreak of war, using all the appropriate means, which naturally vary and rise according to the degree of sharpening of the class struggle and of the general political situation.

"Should war none the less break out, it is their duty to intervene to bring it promptly to an end, and to strive with all their energies to utilise the economic and political crisis brought about by the war in order to stir up politically the masses of the people and hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule."<sup>1</sup>

The resolution was adopted unanimously with great enthusiasm. That was another big victory for the left forces in the Second International. The Stuttgart resolution on the attitude of the Socialists to militarism and war was confirmed at the congresses in Copenhagen in 1910 and in Basel in 1912.

The Basel Congress adopted unanimously a manifesto against war. The manifesto called upon "the workers of all countries to oppose the power of the international solidarity of the proletariat to capitalist imperialism. The proletarians consider it a crime to fire at each other for the benefit of the capitalists' profits, the ambition of dynasties, or the greater glory of secret diplomatic treaties."<sup>2</sup>

But opportunism was gaining more ground in the Second International, the leaders of most of its parties failed to back up their words by deeds, and the resolutions and calls of the Second International concerning war were never carried out.

##### 5. *The Collapse of the Second International. Its Place in History*

World War I broke out in August 1914. The governments of the belligerent countries spoke hypocritically of defending the motherland and national interests, but that was an imperialist war for the redivision of the world, for spheres of influence, raw-material sources, markets and investment spheres.

But the Second International leaders, instead of launching a campaign against the war and the imperialist rulers who had started it, backed up "their" governments and thus sold out the great ideals of the working-class movement and the proletarian revolution, the ideals of brotherhood and international solidarity of the working people of all countries. The Second International as an international organisation of labour parties and trade unions collapsed. Lenin gave a Marxist in-depth analysis of the causes behind the failure.

"The collapse of the Second International is the collapse of opportunism, which developed from the features of a now bygone (and so-called 'peaceful') period of history, and in recent years has come practically to dominate the International."<sup>1</sup> The opportunists had long been preparing that crash, Lenin observed.

Most of the International leaders were unprincipled in the struggle against the opportunists and ultimately many leaders of the social-democratic parties, who in the initial years of the International had adhered to Marxist positions, were later infected with opportunism. At the crucial moment of history, when it was most necessary to lead the working-class struggle against the bourgeoisie and capitalism, they betrayed the workers. After that betrayal the Second International, conquered by opportunism, was no more.

Assessing the historical significance of the Second International, Lenin wrote: "When it is said that the Second International died after suffering shameful bankruptcy, one must be able to understand what this means. It means that opportunism, reformism, petty-bourgeois socialism went bankrupt and died. For the Second International rendered historic service, it has achievements to its credit that are everlasting and which the class-conscious worker will never renounce—the creation of mass working-class organisations—cooperative, trade union and political—the utilisation of the bourgeois parliamentary system, and of all the institutions

<sup>1</sup>R. Palme Dutt, *The Internationale*, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>William Z. Foster, *History of the Three Internationals*, International Publishers, N. Y., 1955, p. 217.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The War and Russian Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 31.



in general of bourgeois democracy, etc."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, on the eve of World War I, the Second International comprised 27 socialist labour parties of 22 countries, with some 12 million people voting for them. The Second International exercised the leadership of many trade unions. In 1912, 19 national trade-union centres, their total membership being 7,400,000, operated under the guidance of the International Trade Union Secretariat. The workers' cooperative movement in Europe, mostly under social-democratic guidance, consisted of about 30,000 consumer cooperatives which included about 9 million people in 1914. Women's and youth organisations of the working class, too, developed under the leadership of social-democratic parties.

Due to the International and its parties the mass socialist press was created in a number of countries, Marxist literature was published, and ideas of scientific socialism were spreading ever more among working people.

The Second International did a good deal also to develop the strategy and tactics of proletarian struggle. In their resolutions the congresses of the International and congresses of social-democratic parties rebuffed the erroneous views of anarchists, on the one hand, and revisionists, on the other. The Second International helped workers to wring from the exploiters a number of economic and political concessions: democratic freedoms, better working conditions and living standards, labour legislation, etc. Those concessions did not end the exploitation of workers, but they helped to strengthen the working-class positions and facilitated the growth of the labour movement. The International played an important role in uniting the national contingents of the working class into one international force. Its congresses and resolutions helped to disseminate the ideas of fraternity and solidarity among workers of all countries, the ideas of proletarian internationalism.

The history of the Second International is the object of fierce ideological controversy today. As they assess the results of the International's activities, the right-wing Socialists normally pay attention only to its struggle against anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, and do not mention, or misinterpret, the struggle carried on by Marxists against revisionists. They emphasise in the International's decisions whatever is said there about the need for the working class to use bourgeois democracy, parliamentary activity, trade-union, cooperative and other organisations, that is, what can be done in the framework of bourgeois legality.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Third International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 504.

The ideologists of modern right-wing social-democracy pass over in silence the significance of the first Russian revolution of 1905 for the international working-class movement and the role of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the struggle against opportunism in the Second International parties.

The right-wing Socialists go out of their way to exonerate leaders of the social-democratic parties from the charge of bringing about the collapse of the Second International and betraying the cause of the working class. Repeating the theses of Kautsky and other Second International leaders, the present-day social-democratic leaders are trying to prove that the International could do nothing during World War I because the masses of workers were allegedly infected with nationalism and chauvinism. They see the causes of the collapse not in the betrayal of the proletarian revolution by the International leaders, nor in their collusion with the bourgeoisie, but in that the ties among the parties of the Second International had been broken and it was therefore impossible to convene its meetings and congresses regularly.

Apart from the right-wing opportunist views, one can hear in the working-class movement also left-wing and sectarian assessments of the Second International and its activities. These assessments stress only the negative aspects in the activities of the International, ignoring all the positive it had done to develop the working-class movement, for the struggle against right- and "left"-wing opportunism.

Communists categorically reject both reformist and sectarian misinterpretations of the activities of the Second International. They value its historical significance and take into account both the positive and the negative in it. This approach alone helps the present-day working-class movement to use the experience of the Second International in the struggle for the interests of the working people, on the one hand, and to avoid mistakes similar to those which in the past led to the triumph of opportunism in working-class organisations and caused the collapse of the Second International.

\* \* \*

As we see, at the turn of the century two trends clashed in growing confrontation in the working-class movement on the national and international scale. And even though the spread of opportunism brought about the downfall of the Second International, the working-class movement on the whole reached a new and higher level. A major achievement was the setting up of independent political parties of the working class and the formation of the first proletarian party of a new type—the Bolshevik Party. The emergence of Lenin-

ism was of immense significance. The proletariat thus gained a wealth of experience in the revolutionary class struggle, especially as regards the 1905 revolution in Russia.

The objective processes going on in the world at that time and the growing of capitalism into imperialism gradually created the preconditions for accomplishing a socialist revolution. World War I laid bare the irreconcilability of profound imperialist contradictions. The imperialists failed to prevent a revolutionary explosion by waging that war. In the middle of the war a revolutionary situation took shape in a number of European countries. It resulted in several revolutions, the Great October Socialist Revolution among them.

## *Chapter Five*

### *The Historic Significance of the Great October Socialist Revolution*

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels who made a revolution in social sciences, substantiated their theoretical conclusion that the growing contradictions within the bourgeois system and the mounting class struggle by the proletariat, would inevitably bring about the downfall of capitalism and victory of socialism. During the lifetime of the great founders of scientific communism, this conclusion was confirmed in practice by the fast rise of the working-class movement and emergence of its organisations, above all its political parties. The Paris Commune was the first ever instance of the seizure of power by the proletariat and its allies. But Marx and Engels did not live to see the victory of the working class, the overthrow of the bourgeois system and the cardinal, socialist remaking of society. The Great October Revolution, the first victorious socialist revolution, marked the start of mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism and ushered in a new era in the history of mankind.

#### *The October Revolution—the Triumph of the Great Ideas of Marxism*

Beginning with October 25, 1917, when the Revolution was accomplished, and to this day, the enemies of communism have been saying again and again that the October Revolution was a kind of "historical anomaly". This is alleged by the politicians and ideologists of the bourgeoisie. But this can sometimes be heard also in the working-class movement, primarily from those who hold social-democratic, reformist views. Some of them go as far as alleging that the October Revolution won almost contrary of Marxism.

The right-wing, anti-Marxist members of the working-class movement often label consistent Marxists, those who firmly defend Marxist-Leninist internationalist principles, "dogmatists", though the term "dogmatism" has a quite definite meaning. To be sure, among true Marxists there are pedants incapable of a creative approach to the theory of Marxism-Leninism. But there can hardly be anything more dogmatic than the way right-wing reformists assess the sources of the victory of the October Revolution and its revolutionary consequences.



Indeed, why is it sometimes alleged that the October Revolution contradicts Marxism? Because those who allege this say that, according to Marx, a socialist revolution should have won *simultaneously in several industrialised countries*. But the October Revolution won in one country, which was not industrialised at that.

Indeed, Marx and Engels believed that the communist revolution would be not only national, but would take place simultaneously in all civilised countries, i.e., at least in England, America, France and Germany. In saying that they proceeded from the fact that capitalism had created the world market and tied all nations to each other so that "each people is dependent on what happens to another."<sup>1</sup> That was a new and well justified view on revolution as a natural historical phenomenon determined by the development of capitalism and the laws governing its development, and at the same time they saw revolution as an international process, not as an isolated national one.

However, later on Marx and Engels further analysed the course of social development and added new elements to their conclusions. In the first place, they paid attention to the fact that to accomplish a revolution there should be not only objective material preconditions, but also subjective ones, such as the will, readiness and ability of the popular masses to set out to accomplish a revolution. There must be a combination of both. But it is by far not always that these two conditions present themselves simultaneously.

Further, Marx and Engels began to notice that the highest level of capitalist development, while providing most favourable material preconditions for building socialism after a revolution, created additional difficulties for accomplishing the revolution. That conclusion had been prompted by the example of England. It is there, in that classic country of pre-monopoly capitalism, that the material preconditions for socialism had been most mature by that time. But the working-class movement there was misled by opportunism—a result, among other things, of England's control of the world market, which enabled the English bourgeoisie to have greater influence on the working class, bribe some of its leaders and make the popular masses believe in the illusory prospects.

It is important that after considering the combination of objective and subjective preconditions for a revolution existing in various countries at that time, Marx and Engels made the conclusion that the centre of the revolutionary movement was shifting first from England to France, and then to Ger-

many. In their last years, both Marx and Engels pinned big hopes on the revolutionary movement in Russia. They noted as early as the mid-19th century the significance of the struggle for the abolition of serfdom in Russia and for the national rights of the peoples enslaved by tsarism. Marx wrote in 1858 that in Russia "combustible matter has accumulated under her own feet, which a strong blast from the West may suddenly set on fire".<sup>1</sup>

Later, in the mid-1880s, Engels repeatedly noted Russia's key significance for a successful revolution in Europe. In a letter to August Bebel in December 1884, he pointed out: "As things are at present, an impulse from outside can scarcely come from anywhere but Russia."<sup>2</sup> In a letter to Vera Zasulich he wrote in April 1885: "What I know or believe I know about the situation in Russia makes me think that the Russians are approaching their 1789. The revolution *must* break out there within a given time; it *may* break out any day. In these circumstances the country is like a charged mine which only needs a match to be applied to it."<sup>3</sup> "Should a revolution break out in Russia, it would create a combination of most favourable conditions," Engels wrote to Paul Lafargue in October 1886.<sup>4</sup>

It is clear that Engels took the developments in Russia duly into account. He wrote, for instance: "In a country where the situation is so strained, where the revolutionary elements have accumulated to such a degree, where the economic conditions of the enormous mass of the people become daily more impossible, where every stage of social development is represented, from the primitive commune to modern large-scale industry and high finance, and where all these contradictions are arbitrarily held in check by an unexampled despotism, a despotism which is becoming more and more unbearable to a youth in whom the dignity and intelligence of the nation are united—when 1789 has once been launched in such a country, 1793 will not be far away."<sup>5</sup>

By the start of the 20th century the situation in Russia developed still further. By that time, as free-competition capitalism was growing into imperialism, the entire capitalist system was ripe for a revolutionary transition to socialism.

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx, "Political Parties in England.—Situation in Europe", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 1986, p. 568.

<sup>2</sup>"Engels to August Bebel in Berlin; London, December 11, 1884", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 360.

<sup>3</sup>Engels to Vera Ivanovna Zasulich in Geneva; London, April 23, 1885", in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 362.

<sup>4</sup>"Engels to Paul Lafargue in Paris; London, den 25 Okt. 1886", in Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 36, 1967, p. 563.

<sup>5</sup>"Engels to Vera Ivanovna Zasulich in Geneva; London, April 23, 1885, in Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 363.

<sup>1</sup>Frederick Engels, "Principles of Communism", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 351.

In those conditions the capitalist chain could well be broken in its weakest link—that was Lenin's conclusion who always drew on the theory of Marx and Engels in his work. This conclusion, at which Lenin had arrived gradually, was finalised in his works *On the Slogan for a United States of Europe* and *The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution*. "Uneven economic and political development," he wrote in 1915, "is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone."<sup>1</sup> A year later Lenin stated: "The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in different countries... From this it follows irrefutably that socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously in all countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois."<sup>2</sup>

Russia became that "one country" and the "weak link" in the chain of imperialism, a country where the victory of the socialist revolution was possible. Why?

The October Revolution is often referred to in the West as a "Russian phenomenon". Well, this expression may well be used. It all depends on what one reads into it. If it is meant to say that the October Revolution was a "historical anomaly", then the expression is all wrong. Indeed, if it had been a "historical anomaly", socialism in the USSR would have disintegrated on its own. But now, 70 years after the October Revolution, socialism has not disappeared but has grown strong and has spread to more than one-third of the world's population. So could it be an "anomaly"? Of course not. It is obvious also that neither a "forward-based strategy", nor "crusades" can destroy socialism, this logical result of the development of human society.

But if the "Russian phenomenon" means that at that time Russia greatly differed from the countries of Western Europe and America, then the expression may be used.

First, Russia was a country whose social and economic image was most contradictory. On the one hand, by the start of this century the country had already reached the *average level* of industrial development and was the fifth industrialised country in the world. The monopoly-type associations, over 150 of them, were gaining ever firmer positions in industry. Russia was third after Germany and the USA as to the extent of monopolisation in industry. Large bank associations were springing up, and as regards the concentration of banks,

Russia was ahead of the other industrialised countries. With large-scale participation of foreign capital, the Russian industrial and banking monopolies merged with each other, creating what is known in Marxist science as financial capital.

On the other hand, while the development level in Russia was high, there also were underdevelopment, precapitalist, feudal and even prefeudal relations, and persistent vestiges of serfdom. It was really a paradox: a country of most backward farming and wild countryside had most advanced industrial and financial capitalism.

This combination of high development and backwardness meant that, by contrast with the West, all types of oppression existed in Russia in a concentrated form: landlord, capitalist and national oppression combined with the political despotism of the tsarist autocracy, and later with the bourgeois Provisional Government. The world war, which caused economic dislocation in the country and was pushing it towards a catastrophe, deteriorated all social contradictions still more, laying them bare before the whole population.

Second, early in the 20th century Russia had a numerous working class—about 20 million workers in 1913. Together with the semi-proletarians in town and country, the industrial workers constituted 64 per cent of the population. Three-fifths of all workers were at the factories employing more than 500 people each (the figure for the United States was less than one-third). That was, on the whole, a militant working class, and its more advanced sections were aware of their role in the struggle for the social remaking of Russia. Whereas in the West the working class was disunited, because a large part of it was infected by opportunist and reformist sentiments, in Russia the bulk of the working class backed the Bolsheviks. The Russian working class was highly revolutionary, well organised, and experienced in the class struggle.

Third, the numerous peasantry in Russia, on the whole, supported the revolution, for most of the peasants were not proprietors but semi-proletarians.

And fourth, which is most important, a strong, efficient and united revolutionary party, equipped with progressive theory and well experienced in practical activities, operated in Russia. At the head of the party was Lenin, a brilliant leader.

That was not, of course, all that made the difference between Russia and the West. But it makes one see why it is Russia that became that "weak link" in the capitalist chain, and why it was there that this chain could be broken by a revolution. The objective preconditions for a socialist revolution were doubtlessly ripe in Russia by 1917. If this had not been so, the revolution would have not won.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 342.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, 1977, p. 79.



It is appropriate to recall here that Lenin, continuing the analysis started by Marx and Engels, formulated several major propositions explaining why in a country with a medium development level, in which the material preconditions for socialism were not as good as in industrialised countries, a revolution could win easier than in those countries. Lenin observed that "it was easier for the Russians than for the advanced countries to begin the great proletarian revolution".<sup>1</sup> He pointed out several factors in Russia at that time: the revolutionary thrust of the masses unusually strong for Europe at that time, a consequence of Russia's great political backwardness; the fusion of the proletarian revolution against the bourgeoisie with the peasants' revolution against the landlords and with the liberation movements of the peoples oppressed by tsarism; the revolutionary experience gained by the popular masses during the 1905-1907 revolution; the presence of the Soviets as a specific form of proletarian revolutionary organisation, a form of state power; and the weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie, which was poorly organised.

On the other hand, in the countries with a high level of capitalist development it was a good deal harder, in Lenin's view, to start a revolution. Because the enemy of a revolution there was "not a rotten autocracy, but a highly cultured and united capitalist class,"<sup>2</sup> which exploited less developed countries and was "able to bribe the upper section of /its/ workers"; and because "in Western Europe, the backward masses of the workers and—to an even greater degree—of the small peasants are much more imbued with bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices than they were in Russia".<sup>4</sup>

These conclusions were fully borne out by the development of the revolutionary movement in the decades after the October Revolution (which will be dwelled upon later in the book).

Speaking about the international significance of the October Revolution, Lenin singled out two aspects. On the one hand, he spoke of the significance of the October events for the revolutionary struggle of the peoples for socialism *in the narrow sense of the word*, meaning "the international validity

or the historical inevitability of a repetition, on an international scale, of what has taken place in our country".<sup>1</sup> Some of the main features of the October Revolution, Lenin said, indicated that "it is the Russian model that reveals to *all* countries something—and something highly significant—of their near and inevitable future".<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Lenin spoke of the impact of the October Revolution on world development *in the broad sense of the word*, that is, its direct influence on the world events in the years immediately following the revolution. Let us consider both aspects.

#### *The Significance of the October Revolution*

The October Revolution would not have won if it were not for the extensive preparations made by the Party with Lenin at the head. The October Revolution was preceded by the great dress rehearsal—the December 1905 armed rising. That was followed by years of persistent and scrupulous work to educate the popular masses, making them see the need to abolish the old system of oppression. That included legal work, also in parliament (the State Duma), and illegal activity which was continued also during World War I.

And, last but not least, the October Revolution was preceded by the bourgeois-democratic revolution in February 1917, which had smashed the hated tsarist regime—a great victory for the working people, for all democratic forces. But it did not deliver the people from exploitation, from social and national oppression, from the agony of the imperialist war; nor did it resolve the profound contradictions tearing the Russian society apart. The proletarian socialist revolution was the demand of the time.

Having gone through the long and hard revolutionary experience, the working class in close alliance with the working peasants backed up the Bolsheviks and overthrew the rule of capitalists and landlords.

The experience of any socialist revolution is interesting and instructive for all fighters for socialism, wherever they operate. For capitalism and the laws governing its development are essentially the same everywhere. The only difference is in the maturity level of society and the specific forms (depending on internal and external conditions) in which this maturity is expressed. Naturally, revolutionaries must take into account the specific forms of the existence of capitalism. But in essence their struggle does not change because of that, and their ultimate goal remains

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Third International and Its Place in History", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Speech to the First All-Russia Congress of Land Departments, Poor Peasants' Committees and Communes, December 11, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1977, p. 348.

<sup>3</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, January 10-18 (23-31), 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, 1972, p. 472.

<sup>4</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1977, p. 65.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

the same—to abolish exploitation and oppression.

Similarly, socialism as a social system is essentially the same everywhere, whatever the forms in which it is expressed, the ways of approaching it, or its phases, that is, it is a society in which there is no exploitation of man by man and no domination of private ownership of the means of production; it is a system of social equality, social justice and freedom. And the path to socialism is, in its basic principles, the same every where.

Considering the above-mentioned specifics of the situation in Russia and the time when the revolution took place, the October Revolution offers a wealth of experience, more than any other socialist revolution.

Russia, as has already been said, was a country of a medium development level. Therefore its experience means a good deal for the revolutionaries in the countries with a similar level of social and economic maturity. This pertains, perhaps in the first place, to the solution by the Russian revolution of the major agrarian and national issues and other problems posed by the existence of precapitalist relations in the countryside, as well as those which the bourgeois-democratic revolution had failed to solve.

"The direct and immediate object of the revolution in Russia," Lenin wrote, "was a bourgeois-democratic one, namely, to destroy the survivals of medievalism and sweep them away completely, to purge Russia of this barbarism, of this shame, and to remove this immense obstacle to all culture and progress in our country."<sup>1</sup>

"We wound up the bourgeois-democratic revolution more thoroughly than had ever been done before anywhere in the world. That is a great gain, and no power on earth can deprive us of it."<sup>2</sup>

This great gain was possible because the Bolsheviks "solved the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in passing, as a 'by-product' of our main and genuinely proletarian-revolutionary, socialist activities".<sup>3</sup> The October Revolution was a *socialist* one. As distinct from dozens of revolutions before it, it did not replace one type of exploitation by another, but put an end to the exploitation of man by man in the country and built the groundwork of a truly humane society in which everything is governed not by a drive for profit but by humane principles of justice.

Therefore the experience of the October Revolution is of

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, 1973, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Notes of a Publicist", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 206.

<sup>3</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 54.

vast significance for any, including industrialised, countries going over to socialism or getting ready for such transition. A point to note here is that the October Revolution gained no small experience in fighting against the oppression of monopoly capitalism, too. Therefore Lenin's work *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, written in 1917, for the first time offered a programme which remains topical today, the programme of transition from state-monopoly capitalism to the revolutionary-democratic state, which, for its part, is a phase of transition towards socialism.

Further. Since class oppression in Russia was compounded by national—colonial, in fact—oppression, the October Revolution was to solve, apart from social problems, the problems involved in the national liberation of millions of people. Thus two revolutions merged. Hence the significance of the October Revolution for all who fight for national liberation.

Finally, the October Revolution was accomplished in the heat of World War I. The peace slogan was a decisive one in the revolution. It was the uncompromising campaign launched by the Bolsheviks against war, for a democratic peace, that attracted to them a vast number of people, even those who at the beginning were far from seeing the need for going over to socialism. The revolution accumulated invaluable experience in radical, revolutionary anti-war and anti-imperialist struggle.

In other words, the October Revolution brought together most different streams and lines of struggle. In fact it was a kind of a prototype of the modern revolutionary process in its entirety. This doubtlessly imparted its experience a broad character universal for that time.

This does not mean, of course, that that experience can and must be copied closely by all and everyone. That would be wrong. In the first place, the experience of the October Revolution, which was the only such experience 60 or even 30 years back, has now been extended and amplified by the experience of the subsequent socialist revolutions, as well as by the struggle for socialism going on in the capitalist countries. On the other hand, the following time-tested thesis is widely known: each revolution is a product of historical development in a given country and cannot win unless it takes most carefully into account the local conditions, traditions and other specifics.

Indeed, one of the lessons of the October Revolution and an important cause of its victory is that Lenin and the Bolsheviks in general analysed the situation in the country and developed their strategy and tactics in a highly creative way, taking due account of the specifics in Russia, its po-



sition in the world, the alignment of class forces, and possible changes in that alliance. Being a good example of a principled and consistent Marxist-Leninist approach to solving problems, the Leninist strategy and tactics used by the Bolsheviks were at the same time an example of how national specifics, the situation and changes in it are to be properly considered.

There was a good deal to be taken into account then. The months between the bourgeois-democratic revolution in February and the October Revolution in 1917 were very eventful, the situation changed abruptly, and so did the conditions and forms of the struggle.

*From February to October: the Bolshevik Strategy and Tactics*

The February Revolution put an end to tsarism, to monarchy, which was replaced by bourgeois-democratic rule. Since that revolution was the result of the broad popular activity and initiative, in February 1917 Russia found itself the most free country in the capitalist world. The Bolshevik Party and its organisations for the first time got a possibility to operate legally. In those conditions the Party had to change drastically the methods of its work. The Party coped with that change. However, while it started legal activities among the masses on a large scale, it nonetheless preserved its machinery of illegal work. Subsequent developments showed it was a wise thing to do. In July the reactionaries tried to launch an offensive and the Bolsheviks switched easily back to illegal work, preserving their forces and retaining their ties with the masses.

The main question after February was, of course, what was to be done next. The opportunists—the Mensheviks and other petty-bourgeois revolutionaries—thought the revolution was over and a long period of bourgeois rule was ahead. Lenin and the Bolsheviks looked at it differently. “The specific feature of the present situation in Russia,” wrote Lenin, “is that the country is *passing* from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organisation of the proletariat, placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie—to its *second* stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants.”<sup>1</sup> The Bolsheviks prepared the Party and the working class for the development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist one. What could not be done in 1905-1907 had to be done this time. And it was done.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, “The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Peasant Revolution”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 22.

That was the first ever experience of a bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into a socialist one. And though the conditions in Russia were not like those in which the working class struggles in the capitalist countries today, the study of the methods and forms of the struggle waged by the Russian workers for an uninterrupted revolution is of immense interest to any country and political party confronted with a similar problem. All the more so, since the Bolsheviks' way of solving that problem was tested, so to speak, during the subsequent socialist revolutions.

As he charted the course towards the socialist revolution, Lenin put forward the slogan “All Power to the Soviets”. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which had first emerged amid the revolutionary events in 1905-1907, were revived in February 1917. The formation of the Soviets demonstrated the strength and determination of the popular masses. But they lacked experience and, besides, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries in the Soviets adopted conciliatory tactics. As a result, actual power was in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the Provisional Government. The situation in Russia at that time was very peculiar, indeed, and, as it became clear later, quite rare: *dual power*, that is, simultaneous existence of two dictatorships—the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

Understandably, a situation like that could only be temporary. Either one or the other dictatorship had to be established. The Bolsheviks decided firmly to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat which would function as a republic of Soviets.

At that time, it must be recalled, the opportunists objected to Lenin's idea. They reiterated (referring to Engels) that the parliamentary republic was the best kind of power for the working class. True enough, Engels had stressed the significance of the parliamentary republic as a possible political form of working-class power and the best of those known by that time to the West. But the situation in Russia was different from that in the West in Engels' time. Here in Russia a new form of working-class power—the Soviets—which was more progressive than the parliamentary republic, *already* emerged and enjoyed popular support. In these conditions, to reject the Soviets and insist on a return of parliamentarism, which had become obsolete in the case of Russia, would mean a concession to the bourgeoisie and a step back. “Not a parliamentary republic—to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would be a retrograde step—but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies

throughout the country, from top to bottom,"<sup>1</sup> Lenin stressed. Having said that, Lenin did not rule out the possibility of using different forms of revolutionary power by other countries. Moreover, he repeatedly stressed that there would inevitably be a vast diversity of such forms as the revolution would spread to other countries.

In Russia, considering the situation there at the time, the revolution could be accomplished with the Soviets assuming power in the country. "All Power to the Soviets" was the slogan of the Party. But even in this case, Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not make a dogma of their guidelines. When the counter-revolutionaries launched an offensive and the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries took power in the Soviets in July, the Bolshevik Party stated: there is no more dual power; there is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with the Soviets acting as yes-men. The slogan "All Power to the Soviets" was temporarily withdrawn. It was advanced again later, in September 1917, when the Bolsheviks were winning the majority in the Soviets and the Soviets were again becoming militant revolutionary organisations of the popular masses.

But in what way was power to be assumed by the Soviets, as the slogan said? That issue was debated in the Party. Some said a broad representation in the Soviets should be ensured by setting up a bloc of Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. Some even proposed that the Mensheviks be admitted to the Party. Lenin was categorically opposed to this. Any kind of alliance with opportunists, especially when popular struggle was on the upswing, when the decision was being made to advance towards a revolution, could only spoil everything. Not an alliance with the opportunists but a decisive break with them (and with any ultra-left tendencies for that matter)—that was, according to Lenin, an earnest of success. The subsequent developments showed he was absolutely right.

Thus, the most important aspect in the experience of the October Revolution was that it made it obvious that the struggle for the revolution, for socialism required a complete break with opportunism and with ultra-left voluntarism. "One of the necessary conditions for preparing the proletariat for its victory is a long, stubborn and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism, and similar bourgeois influences and trends, which are inevitable, since the proletariat is operating in a capitalist environment,"<sup>2</sup> wrote Lenin. This was fully borne out also by the socialist revolu-

tions in the 1940s and 1950s.

The Bolsheviks saw a sure way to the victory of the revolution in mobilising the popular masses, in winning their support of revolutionary slogans or, in other words, in building *a political army of the proletarian revolution*.

The task was, above all, to win the working class over for the ideas of the revolution. The work being done towards that end was, indeed, tireless and multifarious. The Bolshevik organisations at factories, especially at the bigger ones, were growing stronger. The Bolsheviks were active in the trade unions, working hard to overcome the petty-bourgeois influence there. They backed up the initiative of the working masses who were setting up factory committees which demanded workers' control at industrial enterprises. Working youth leagues and working women's organisations were springing up. The Red Guards, the armed forces of the proletariat, were being formed.

Between February and October the ideas of revolution were constantly gaining influence among the workers. That was possible only because the Party consistently defended the interests of the working people, expressing their will, and displayed firm adherence to principle. The Bolsheviks made no concessions to petty-bourgeois sentiments and illusions. They were advancing towards the socialist goal, explaining it to the masses, stirring them to action.

At the same time, the Bolsheviks set out resolutely to win the support of the working peasants. To that end, they firmly backed up the demands formulated by the peasants themselves, who were disillusioned with the results of the February Revolution and with the Provisional Government which had in every way avoided giving land to those who tilled it. The peasants were seizing manorial estates. The Bolsheviks supported them. They explained: "*If you wait until the law is written, and yourselves do not develop revolutionary initiative, you will have neither the law nor the land.*"<sup>1</sup> Gradually the poorest peasants came to understand that without the revolution and without reliance on the working class the agrarian issue would never be solved.

However, the Bolsheviks supported not just any demands of the peasants, but only those which did not conflict with the interests of the working class and could not obstruct the path towards the revolution. The interests of the poor peasants and those of the proletariat on the whole coincided. But as regards the peasants of average means and especially the kulaks (rich peasants exploiting the labour of others),

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, p. 275.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the RSDLP(B), April 24-29 (May 7-12), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 285.



the situation was quite different. The kulaks were, in actual fact, the rural bourgeoisie. The class struggle in the countryside rose to a high pitch already then, in the months preceding the revolution. The stance of the Bolsheviks was clear: they supported the poor peasants in their struggle against the kulaks. The peasants of average means were vacillating and occupied an intermediate position. Being proprietors, their interests were close to those of the kulaks. But, exploited by the bourgeoisie, including the rural bourgeoisie, they had also other interests, close to those of the rural poor and the working class. So the Bolsheviks set out to achieve neutrality of those peasants. That did not mean, of course, that they were to be isolated from the revolution. The task was to paralyse their vacillations, isolate them from the kulaks and then win them over to the side of the proletariat and the revolution.

As it became obvious later, this policy achieved the desired effect: the majority of the Russian peasants came to support the revolution.

The October Revolution showed beyond any doubt that in defending the interests of the non-proletarian sections of the working people the working class can back up only those of their demands which facilitate social progress. But it cannot support the demands associated with the ties between the non-proletarian sections of the population and the bourgeoisie, demands linked with the interests and needs of the latter, for this would contradict its own interests, the interests of the revolution.

Building up the alliance of the working class and the peasants, the Bolsheviks launched extensive activities in the army. On the one hand, the soldiers were the same workers and peasants in uniforms, brought together by their common lot in the army. On the other hand, as they were preparing for the revolution, the Bolsheviks could not confine themselves merely to ensuring alignment of forces, in social terms, favourable for the accomplishment of the revolution. They had to ensure also a favourable balance of military forces, to secure support for the revolution by a considerable part of the army.

Much attention was paid to the work in the army. It was conducted by various methods: newspapers for soldiers were published, soldiers' councils were set up, and ties were established between the workers and army units. And, of course, Party cells were organised in the army, which became the core of revolutionary activities among soldiers. The winning of a considerable part of the soldiers over to the revolution largely ensured its victory.

The Bolshevik Party also worked to strengthen the alliance

of the working-class movement with the oppressed peoples in the national peripheries. The Bolsheviks supported the revolutionary-democratic trends alive in the national liberation movement and came out resolutely against the nationalistic views and actions that the bourgeoisie was trying to foster. Upholding the right of nations to self-determination, the Bolsheviks at the same time sought to achieve united action by the freedom fighters belonging to different nationalities and ethnic groups.

As they conducted the work among the masses, the Bolsheviks drew on the experience of the labour movement in the West and their own experience gained in 1905-1907. Summarising that experience, Lenin wrote: "When the revolution has been sufficiently prepared ... several thousand workers no longer constitute the masses. This word begins to denote something else. The concept of 'masses' undergoes a change so that it implies the majority, and not simply a majority of the workers alone, but the majority of all the exploited. Any other kind of interpretation is impermissible for a revolutionary."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin stressed also that, while working to unite the masses and form the army of the revolution, the revolutionaries should remember that under capitalism the working people, on the one hand, are being prepared for struggle by capitalist reality itself, by exploitation and oppression, but, on the other, they are subjected to intensive ideological and political brainwashing by the bourgeoisie. "Capitalism would not be capitalism if it did not ... place in the hands of the bourgeoisie a gigantic apparatus of falsehood and deception to hoodwink the masses of workers and peasants, to stultify their minds, and so forth.

"That is why only the proletariat can *lead the working people* out of capitalism to communism. It is no use thinking that the petty-bourgeois or semi-proletarian masses can decide in advance the extremely complicated political question: 'to be with the working class or with the bourgeoisie'. The *vacillation* of the non-proletarian sections of the working people is inevitable."<sup>2</sup>

The Bolsheviks set out to overcome that vacillation. They saw that propaganda and political activities among the workers, peasants and other sections of the working people were not enough. For all the importance of propaganda, agitation, meetings and discussions, the popular masses should, in the first place, acquire their own *political experience*.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, 1977, p. 476.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 267.

The petty-bourgeois revolutionaries of that time, the Mensheviks, tried to limit popular action to elections. Election was a magic word to them. Lenin's reply to that was that "the proletariat cannot achieve victory if it does not win the majority of the population to its side. But to limit that winning to polling a majority of votes in an election *under the rule of the bourgeoisie*, or to make it the condition for it, is crass stupidity, or else sheer deception of the workers."<sup>1</sup> Because, Lenin went on, under capitalism the working people are incapable "of acquiring the high degree of class-consciousness, firmness of character, perception and wide political outlook that will enable them to decide, *merely by voting*, or at all events, to *decide in advance*, without long experience of struggle, that they will follow a particular class, or a particular party".<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, what was needed above all was practical action by the popular masses themselves aimed at accomplishing a revolution, abolishing the power of the bourgeoisie and building a new, socialist state. So the Bolsheviks, not limiting their work to propaganda and agitation, were organising such practical actions. On every important occasion they took the people into the streets. Each time when a tide of popular protest was rising, they organised public meetings, marches and strikes.

Not always, of course, did these actions yield practical results. There were setbacks, and there was bloodshed. On July 3, 1917, for instance, the bourgeoisie ordered the shooting of demonstrators. Capital punishment was introduced in the fighting army. But the people learned their lessons from the setbacks. It was the case of growing militant determination, rather than any defeatist sentiment. When Commander-in-Chief Kornilov attempted to raise a mutiny in August to stop the revolutionisation process among the popular masses, it was the masses—workers, Red Guards, soldiers and sailors—who crushed the rebels.

Agitation and propaganda among the masses combined with the people's actions, and their education through their own experience—that was the main cause behind the victory of the October Revolution and a most important aspect of the Bolshevik Party's experience.

An extremely important question was under what slogans the work among the masses was to be conducted. It has already been said earlier in the book that the Bolsheviks' main thrust, towards the revolution, was expressed in the

slogan "All Power to the Soviets". But that was not enough. There had to be other slogans, too, clearly indicating the urgent problems facing the people, reflecting their vital needs. The Bolsheviks had such slogans: "Land to the Peasants, Peace to the Peoples, Bread to the Hungry"—that was the succinct formulation of the masses' demands.

As we see, the slogans were not directly socialist, but of a general democratic character. But the Bolsheviks (considering that the bourgeois-democratic revolution had failed to accomplish a number of the tasks it had set) read a socialist meaning into them. They pointed to facts of reality proving that a bourgeois government was incapable of accomplishing those tasks; that could be done only through a socialist revolution. This approach of the Bolsheviks was a convincing example of how the struggle for democracy is to be combined with the struggle for socialism, the former being subordinated to the latter, the example of how various streams of the liberation movement merge into one powerful flow.

The work conducted by the Bolsheviks among the popular masses enabled them gradually to win over for the revolution the working people, the proletariat above all. "We have the following of the majority of a *class*, the vanguard of the revolution, the vanguard of the people, which is capable of carrying the masses with it," wrote Lenin. "We have the following of the *majority* of the people."<sup>1</sup>

#### *The Most Bloodless Revolution*

The revolution was coming. But in what form would it be accomplished? The Bolsheviks preferred a *peaceful* way. They realised that, first, a peaceful way was the same revolutionary action effected primarily by political means. When an opportunity of a peaceful transition to socialism presented itself in Russia, Lenin said: "This civil war, so far as we are concerned, turns into peaceful, prolonged, and patient class propaganda."<sup>2</sup> Second, the Bolsheviks understood that the bourgeoisie would not peacefully relinquish its positions and a peaceful transition to socialism was possible only in favourable conditions, when the alignment of class forces on a national and international scale made it impossible for the bourgeoisie to oppose the revolution by the force of arms.

This was the situation in Russia following the February Revolution. At that time it was a country where a revolutionary

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 266.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Marxism and Insurrection", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), April 24-29 (May 7-12), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 236.



party could conduct extensive activities legally; the odds were actually in favour of the workers, at least in Petrograd; there functioned the worker power bodies—the Soviets; and the external imperialist forces, divided by the war, had no chance to intervene in the Russian affairs.

Later, after the rout of the Kornilov mutiny, there was a brief period when a peaceful development of the revolution was again possible. But that time, as before, the opportunity was not used. The Bolsheviks, remembering the lessons of the past, were prepared for any turn of events, and for any change in the ways of the struggle. As the Party headed towards the socialist revolution, it did all it could to accomplish a revolution in a peaceful way. But the bourgeoisie left it no such possibility. The conclusion made by Marx and Engels, that it is not the proletariat but the bourgeoisie that chooses the armed way of class violence, was again confirmed. The bourgeoisie is the first to take up arms to stop a revolution. The proletariat is compelled to respond, naturally, with armed violence. Aware of this law of history, the Bolshevik Party did not allow itself and the working class to be taken unawares: it firmly pursued the course towards an armed rising.

One of the main aspects of the experience of the October Revolution is that it shows how important it is for a revolutionary party to be able to change the forms of struggle rapidly, going without hesitation from one form to another, preparing the best way it can for a possible peaceful development of the revolution, or for a rising, for a seizure of power by the force of arms. The experience of the Paris Commune and what had been learnt on the barricades in 1905 came in handy.

Reviewing the lessons of the revolutions, including the October Revolution, Lenin wrote: "Two very important practical conclusions follow from this: first, that in order to accomplish its task the revolutionary class must be able to master *all* forms or aspects of social activity without exception...; second, that the revolutionary class must be prepared for the most rapid and brusque replacement of one form by another."<sup>1</sup>

Bourgeois historians and propaganda men have been speaking of "cruelty" of the October Revolution for many decades now, of a "tragic example of Bolshevism" or an "agonising revolution". But it were the predecessors of those who speak of that "cruelty" that did all to drown the revolution in blood.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 96.

The taking of the Winter Palace, the former residence of Russian tsars (in October 1917 the seat of the bourgeois Provisional Government)—the event which culminated the seizure of power by the Russian proletariat and its allies—caused the death of very few people. Of course, any human life is invaluable, but one can hardly name any other social revolution which was as bloodless.

Later, however, when the bourgeoisie launched a civil war, and when the interventionist forces of the Entente invaded Russia, the loss of human lives and destruction were enormous. All in all, in the Soviet Republic at that time 8 million were killed or died of wounds, hunger or epidemics. Who was responsible for all that? Russian and foreign counter-revolutionaries launched terror, the civil war and the intervention by 14 states. The revolutionaries pardoned many tsarist generals and capitalists, believing their word of honour. But the generals and capitalists armed themselves again, to kill.

At that time in 1918-1922, they justified their actions by a "Soviet military threat", and they still do it today, when the USA and NATO are conducting an unrestrained arms race.

As soon as it won, the October Revolution immediately proposed peace and peaceful coexistence to all other countries. Lenin's Decree on Peace was the first legislative act of Soviet power. It has never departed from this principle ever since.

The Western powers were most hostile to the October Revolution from the outset. In 1918-1922 they sent troops to strangle the revolution in its cradle. Then came 1941 and the war the Soviet people will never be able to forget. Besides, there have been blockades and boycotts and dozens of other aggressive acts against the Soviet Union.

Now back to October 1917. The revolution began as the most merciful and humane one. After the capture of the Winter Palace a few people of the assaulting force asked the military academy cadets who a minute ago had been shooting at them: "Now, will you take up arms against the people any more?" "No," answered the cadets, one by one. Whereupon they were allowed to go free. This episode was cited by John Reed, an American author and an eye witness of the October 1917 events, in his book *Ten Days That Shook the World*.

In a speech in the Petrograd Soviet on November 4 (17), 1917, Lenin said he thought it possible that the exploiters be treated fairly mildly. He was against any wild attempts at launching a civil war or at spilling blood in vain.

Bourgeois political parties were not "banned" as it is often

alleged. Not trusted by the people any longer, they had to disband. Incidentally, political parties and organisations hostile to the proletariat were allowed to operate in Soviet Russia until the summer of 1918. The bourgeois press existed there too.

As for overcrowded prisons, which they have talked about to this day, the officially registered fact is that as of March 1, 1918, there were merely 187 political prisoners in Petrograd. There was not a single instance of capital punishment in the country for political motives in the first months of the socialist revolution (between October 1917 and May 1918).

But in the summer of 1918 there began a period of terrorism against the revolution. On August 30, 1918, Fanya Kaplan, a Socialist Revolutionary, wounded Lenin in an assassination attempt. On the same day Moisei Uritsky, Chairman of the Petrograd Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counter-Revolution, Sabotage and Profiteering, and a few days later Volodarsky, another outstanding revolutionary leader, were assassinated. On September 20, 1918, Socialist Revolutionaries and English interventionists shot dead 26 Baku Commissars in the sands of Turkmenia.

The overthrown exploiter classes did not stop short of the cruellest means, including massive terrorism and large-scale armed struggle. Therefore the All-Russia Central Executive Committee declared the country a military camp, set up the Revolutionary Military Council, and resolved: "The workers and peasants will respond to the white terror of the enemies of workers' and peasants' power by mass red terror against the bourgeoisie and its agents." The country was forced to fight under the slogan "Victory or death!"

One of the main lessons of history, according to Lenin, is that "when the working people themselves take power in their hands the ruling classes resort to unheard-of crimes and shootings if it is a matter of protecting their money-bags".<sup>1</sup> The October Revolution fully confirmed that conclusion. This means that any revolution, if it really wants to win, should be prepared to protect its gains, to protect socialism by all means available. It should get ready for such defence well in advance, even before the revolution has won.

The victory of the October Revolution was a logical outcome of the preceding development of the world revolutionary process, of the struggle waged by the popular masses led by the working class for the elimination of the capitalist system and the building of a new society instead—commu-

nism. The socialist revolution in Russia came as a result of the operation of the main laws governing social development which determined the need to abolish a system based on exploitation and oppression and to go over to higher forms of society based on social ownership of the means of production which alone can provide conditions for a normal functioning of productive forces and for an all-round development of every individual.

The October Revolution won because at the head of it was the Russian working class, the prime mover of the country's social and political development.

It won because a powerful alliance of the proletariat and the poor peasants was established.

It won because the working class and its allies had the Soviets, the popular power bodies they themselves had formed.

It won because the Russian bourgeoisie was relatively weak, while the international bourgeoisie, engaged in the war, could not immediately come to its aid.

Finally, which is exceptionally important, the October Revolution won because the popular masses were led by the well tested, militant revolutionary Bolshevik Party.

October 1917 marked a cardinal turn in Russia's development. The proletariat became the ruling class. The dictatorship of the proletariat rallied the working people in town and country—the vast majority of the population. After the October Revolution, the Communist Party became the ruling one and set to accomplishing the historic tasks of building a Soviet government, remoulding the economy along socialist lines, defending the gains of the revolution from the enemies at home and abroad, establishing closer ties with the workers in other countries and helping them in their struggle against the oppressors.

The Decree on Land, adopted as early as November 8 (October 26), 1917, the second day of the revolution, abolished all aristocratic land tenure without compensation. The land was turned over to the peasants. Most of the peasantry sided with the revolution. Class divisions and class privileges were abolished and common citizenship was introduced for all. The new government declared the freedom of conscience and separated the church from the state and schools from the church. Women were granted equal rights with men.

The Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, which proclaimed political rights equal for all the peoples of Russia, including the right to self-determination and formation of independent states, won over for the revolution the national minorities, which had been cruelly exploited by tsarism.

The transformation of the capitalist economy into a socialist one came up against fierce resistance of the bourgeoisie.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, January 10-18 (23-31), 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 460.



By establishing worker control at factories the Soviet power put an end to sabotage actions by the bourgeoisie and gave the workers the opportunity to learn how to manage production. The workers' and factory committees assumed administrative and economic functions. All banks, factories, mines, railways, and the means of transport and communication were taken away from the capitalists and landowners, to become the property of all.

As it expropriated the capitalists and landowners, the Soviet power began immediately to improve the living conditions of the working people. Hundreds of thousands of workers' families were moved from basements and barracks into houses that once belonged to the exploiters. The working people were given access to free education. Palaces were given to the working people, to be used as health resorts, museums, clubs and children's boarding schools. Medical care was provided free. The working conditions and safety improved considerably. The government introduced an 8-hour working day, and issued a decree on social insurance in case of illness, disablement or unemployment.

In a word, the revolution marked the start of a cardinal social renovation of the whole country. But the significance of the October Revolution is greater than that, for it was not only a national but a world phenomenon.

*The Upswing of the Working-Class and Revolutionary Movement in Capitalist Countries*

The immediate influence of the October Revolution on the working-class and overall mass struggle was seen, above all, in that it was *the first instance in history that the basic contradictions of the capitalist system as a whole were resolved in a revolutionary way.* In the epoch of imperialism that system had grown ripe for the revolution, for starting the advancement towards socialism. It is only natural that the victory of the working class in a capitalist country, especially in a vast country like Russia, could not but give a fresh powerful impetus to the revolutionary struggle the world over.

Besides, the impact of October 1917 on the revolutionary process in the world was all the stronger because in Russia it was a combination of socialist, democratic and national liberation revolutions and the popular struggle for profound democratic reforms, for peace.

The February Revolution, in which the tsarist regime was toppled, set off a wave of solidarity actions among the working class of the West. A much greater response was evoked by the October Revolution. However, not all proletarians, and

even not all the revolutionary-minded Social Democrats immediately saw the social significance of the reforms effected in Russia: the change was too unexpected and, which was most important, too unusual to them. One of the very first acts of the October Revolution was the Decree on Peace. The working people in all countries were greatly impressed to learn that revolutionary Russia had broken with the policy of war. The first demonstrations of solidarity with the October Revolution—popular action in support of the Leninist policy of peace—reached wide proportions in the West. The year from October 1917 to November 1918, when World War I ended, was one of the significant periods in the history of the peace struggle by the working class.

At the conference of the French General Confederation of Labour (CGT) in Clermont-Ferrand in December 1917, the revolutionary syndicalists submitted a resolution in support of the Soviet government's proposal on concluding peace without annexation and indemnities. As many as 100 thousand people took part in the massive anti-war action by the French metal workers in May 1918. The internationalists in the French socialist movement strongly condemned war and spoke in defence of the October Revolution, even though they did not accept the Bolshevik slogan on turning the imperialist war into a civil war.

In Austria-Hungary, the impact of the socialist revolution in Russia was seen in the powerful strike movements in Vienna, Upper Austria, Styria, Moravia, Galicia, Trieste and Hungary in support of the peace programme advanced by the Soviet government.

The great striving for peace was the chief factor behind the spread of revolutionary sentiments in Germany, where a general strike was called from late January to early February 1918 at metal-working and other factories, the largest action by German workers during the war. The political slogans of that period and, in the first place, the workers' demand for peace without annexation and indemnities were evidence of the direct influence of the October Revolution.

Understandably, the response to the October Revolution on the part of the working-class movement was not confined to the support of the slogan of peace. The working people of all countries were attracted, above all, by the far-reaching social and economic reforms effected in Russia by the revolution. The struggle waged by the workers in the capitalist world for similar reforms in their countries was now made easier by the new social situation the events in Russia created in the world.

Before the revolution, the balance of strength between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie within a country and in the

world was, on the whole, in favour of the bourgeoisie. But when the Russian working class seized power, created its own state and set to building a new society, the balance tipped in favour of the world working class. This affected the international events and the scope and character of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in each capitalist state. The ties between the victorious working class of Russia and all other contingents of the revolutionary working-class movement were a new source of strength for the world working class. Their international unity placed the bourgeoisie in the clutch, as it were, between the working class in the capitalist countries and victorious socialism.

Of great significance was the cardinal change in the mentality of the working class. Prior to the October Revolution many workers did not believe in their strength, while the bourgeoisie did all to make the workers believe they were not strong enough and could not do without exploiters, that they were incapable of building a new life. The working people of Russia proved the contrary. The international working class now had confidence in its creative potentialities.

Close and well organised interaction was established between the working class of Russia and the proletarians of the Western countries since the very first days of the October Revolution. As it took power, the Russian working class pursued not only its own national goals, not only the liberation of itself and all Russian working people from oppression and exploitation. The great goal it set itself was to render every assistance to its class brothers in other countries.

The working class and all working people in the capitalist world, for their part, came out in support of the world's first socialist revolution right from the start. "We not only supported the Russian Revolution," wrote Maurice Thorez about the attitude of the advanced workers of France to the October Revolution, "we looked on the October Socialist Revolution as our own vital cause, the cause of the proletariat of France and all countries. We regarded it as our gain, the gain of the entire international working-class movement, and we, the French proletarians, declared our confidence in it and our duty to learn from Lenin."

When in the autumn of 1918 the imperialists of the Entente launched an armed intervention to support counter-revolution in Russia, workers in many countries came to the aid of the revolution. After October 1917 there was no capitalist country in which the revolutionary movement would not grow under the impact of the victorious socialist revolution. In some capitalist countries revolutions erupted and workers fought to establish proletarian power. The Finnish workers were the first to establish their power after the October Rev-

olution, on January 28, 1918. Late in October 1918 a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Austria-Hungary led to the disintegration of the monarchy and formation of several independent states. In November that year a bourgeois-democratic revolution began in Germany. In December, the power of the proletariat was established in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The Hungarian Soviet Republic was formed on March 21, 1919. With its support Soviet power was established in Slovakia. In April 1919 the Bavarian Soviet Republic was proclaimed. In July 1920 Soviet power was established in Poland with the centre in Bialystok.

These revolutions greatly advanced the social development of these countries. All of them had been caused by the aggravation of the contradictions of capitalism. And the proletariat, always the leader in the revolutions, displayed enormous energy and courage, demonstrating it was the most progressive force of the nation.

During the revolutions Soviets were set up, Red Guards, Red Army and revolutionary militia units were formed, revolutionary judicial organs were founded, and worker control was established at factories. In some cases big property in town and country was nationalised. Much attention was paid to raising the working people's living standards (including measures to improve food distribution, reduce unemployment, provide better living conditions, etc.). The social and economic rights of the working people and democratic liberties for the people were proclaimed and began to be carried into effect. The revolutions were accomplished differently in different countries, the working people using both armed force and peaceful means in their struggle.

However, these proletarian revolutions in the West were defeated, mainly because the alignment of forces in the world and in the capitalist countries was unfavourable for the proletariat. The world bourgeoisie had ample opportunities to export counter-revolution. German imperialism, for instance, played the chief role in suppressing the Finnish, Bavarian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian revolutions. The Entente troops smashed the forces of the Hungarian, Slovak and Polish revolutions.

The experience of that time also showed that the subjective factor of the socialist revolution was weak in most of the capitalist countries. In that period, the communist parties there were just taking shape and could not yet lead effectively the revolutionary struggle of the popular masses, while the social-democratic parties were incapable of revolutionary action.

The right-wing social-democratic leaders in Germany together with the centrists won the majority in the Soviets



and sought to prevent the revolution from becoming socialist and to prevent the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the national congress of the Soviets, the right-wing Social Democrats, being in the majority and acting against the demands of the popular masses for giving all power to the Soviets, handed power to the government of right-wing opportunists—Friedrich Ebert and Philipp Scheidemann. That spelled the end of the Soviets and victory for the bourgeoisie. The German troops, commanded by war minister Gustaf Noske, a right-wing Social Democrat, brutally quashed the workers' rising in Berlin in January 1919; and the German proletarian leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered on his orders.

In Hungary, the right-wing Social Democrats in the united party obstructed the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship, assumed capitulatory positions, and in the end took part in the rout of the revolution.

The 1917-1919 events showed that the proletarian revolution under the leadership of centrist parties of the working class cannot win either. In Germany, the Independent Social-Democratic Party held a centrist position, but in actual fact it backed the right-wing social-democratic leaders and on all the main issues of the revolution opposed the Communists and left-wing Social Democrats. During the Berlin rising of the proletariat in January 1919, the Independents pushed the Communists away from the leadership and, instead of launching a resolute offensive, vacillated and then entered into negotiations with the government. That encouraged the counter-revolutionaries and ultimately led to the defeat of the rising. In Bavaria the Independents, who entered the government together with Communists, assumed capitulatory positions as soon as they came up against difficulties, and ousted the Communists from the government posts. That gave the counter-revolutionaries a chance to start an armed attack against Soviet power with the support of the 20,000-strong army sent by Scheidemann and Noske. On May 1, 1919, the counter-revolutionaries led by Noske broke into Munich and dealt cruelly with the revolutionary workers.

So, the experience of the socialist revolutions tells us that the social-democratic parties failed to meet the hopes of the working class, and their right wing betrayed the proletarian revolutions. Proceeding from the experience of the revolutionary movements at that period, Lenin wrote in October 1918: "Europe's greatest misfortune and danger is that it has no revolutionary party. It has parties of traitors... But

it has no revolutionary party."<sup>1</sup> The absence of experienced, influential and steered revolutionary workers' parties was the main weakness of the working class, which affected the course of the revolutions. The Marxist-Leninist proletarian parties of the new type were just taking shape during the revolutions.

The young communist parties and groups had serious drawbacks and made mistakes. The experience of the Hungarian Communists showed this very well. Having done immense work to effect revolutionary changes in Hungary, the Communists also made a few mistakes, which were typical to some extent of other revolutions as well. The main one was that they underestimated the leading role of the Marxist-Leninist party in a socialist revolution. When the united party of the working class was being formed, the Hungarian Communists did not purge it of opportunists and centrists, and offered the Social Democrats most of the posts in the Party's leading organs. Having overestimated the influence of the Social Democrats, and under-rating the fact that the working people gravitated towards Marxism-Leninism, the Communists disbanded the Communist Party right away.

Knowing that the Communist Party was young and inexperienced and that the Social Democrats still had considerable influence, Lenin expressed apprehension for the fate of the revolution. He believed that in those conditions the Communists should not have agreed to the immediate formation of a united workers' party, but form an alliance with the left-wing Social Democrats in the framework of the Soviet government.

The proletarian dictatorship bodies had drawbacks, too. The Soviets were formed from among members of traditional public organisations, in which Social Democrats were in the majority, and the latter easily brought many of their own representatives into them. At factories the workers were guided by the trade unions controlled by social-democratic trade-union bureaucrats. The decree on giving commanding positions in the Red Army to workers was not always complied with. Among the commissars there were many Social Democrats who did not represent revolutionary workers. Many former policemen remained in the Red Militia.

As they were restructuring the economy along socialist lines, the Hungarian Communists failed to see the importance of a transition period, thinking it should be very brief. Small enterprises were nationalised; craftsmen and small proprietors were not provided with raw materials and joined production cooperatives under compulsion. That left the rev-

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 112.

olution without support from the middle strata of the urban population.

A number of bad mistakes were made as regards the agrarian question, which was tackled not as a political but as a purely economic matter. The decree on the agrarian reform was published when the revolution was already two weeks old. And it envisaged not the distribution of land among the peasants (which was exactly what they wanted and which would have won them over for Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat), but its nationalisation, with the land to be handed over immediately to peasant cooperatives. The peasants were not yet prepared for uniting immediately in cooperatives and jointly cultivating land. They were disillusioned with such a policy of the government, and that was used by counter-revolution for weakening and ultimately defeating Soviet power in Hungary.

The policy pursued by the Hungarian Communists with regard to the peasants was not differentiated. They failed to ensure support for the revolution by the poor and to neutralise the middle peasants. The policy of restricting the rich peasants exploiting the labour of others was pursued inconsistently. As a result, the peasants, including the poor among them, felt no considerable improvement of their conditions and did not join the working class in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Its class basis shrank.

But behind these shortcomings and the mistakes made by Hungarian and other Communists, a consequence of their lack of experience and the complexity of the tasks facing them, one cannot fail to see the immense and diverse activities they conducted among the masses to achieve the victory of the socialist revolution. Whatever there was positive or negative in the experience of the Soviet Republic in Hungary, it, just like the experience of the other revolutions of 1918-1919, is very helpful for the international working class and the international revolutionary movement in our time as well.

So, in the years following October 1917, the revolutionary upswing in the capitalist countries was not strong enough to grow into a victorious proletarian revolution. But there, too, the class struggle developed to a much higher level and acquired new features. Under the impact of the Great October Revolution the working people stepped up their struggle for vital needs and democratic demands.

The working-class movement after the revolution displayed a diversity of the forms of struggle, militancy and determination, with vast numbers of people joining the movement. The strike movement, too, reached immense proportions. In England, 1.5 million people took part in the strikes during

the 5 years before World War I and 7 million in the 6 years after the war. The figures for France are 900 thousand and 3.2 million; for Germany, 2.6 million and 8.7 million; and for Italy, over 950 thousand and 5 million respectively. The number of strikers in the United States increased from 1.2 million in 1917 to 4.16 million in 1919.

In the new situation the class struggle by the working people in several countries won them new victories and a number of their major social and political demands were met legislatively. Among the factors bringing these victories were the pressure exerted by the masses and the force of the example of the October Revolution, the example of socialism which had met important social demands of the working people in Soviet Russia. As is known, the organised working class had demanded an 8-hour working day, social insurance and the like, way before October 1917. But none of these demands were met then. Only the victory of the October Revolution guaranteed basic social rights to the Russian working class and gave an impetus required for the proletariat in the West to demand what it had been fighting for for decades. Under the impact and pressure of the October Revolution and the class struggle waged by the workers in capitalist countries, the bourgeoisie was compelled to agree to a number of concessions for the working people.

The Washington Conference of the International Labour Office in 1919 adopted a draft convention on introducing an 8-hour working day. In the subsequent years the workers of France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Belgium and Finland achieved the adoption of national legislation on the 8-hour working day, on the right to strike and to collective agreements. The legislation, limited as it was, was often violated by the employers. Still, its very adoption was a large gain of the working people.

The bourgeoisie and the reformists boast of caring much for raising the living standards for workers and are spreading reformist illusions among them. In reality the gains of the working class in increasing their living standards are the result above all of the revolutionary pressure of the popular masses inspired by the October Revolution and the example of socialist reforms in the USSR and, later, in other socialist countries. Social Democrats themselves sometimes have had to admit it.

That the workers' struggle in a number of countries had entered an entirely new stage was seen in that they came up with the demands to nationalise the main industries, establish worker control at factories and take the factories into their hands. In Italy the workers of Milan responded to the massive lockout in 1920 by occupying 300 industrial enter-



prises. Their revolutionary example was followed by workers in Rome, Genoa, Turin, Naples and other industrial centres in the country. The workers undertook to organise production, achieved uninterrupted output, guarded the factories, and began to form units of Red Guards. The capture of factories showed that a decisive battle for power between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was near in Italy.

During the strike movement in Britain the workers also demanded the nationalisation of the main industries and worker control at factories. In some countries (Austria, Yugoslavia, Romania and Norway) the workers set up Soviets of Workers' Deputies to fight for their vital needs and attempted to organise their life in a new way, the way it was done in revolutionary Russia.

The October Revolution largely influenced the struggle carried on by agricultural workers and peasants who often acted simultaneously with the working people of the cities. The peasant movement was larger, and better organised; the peasants began to use a proletarian method of struggle—the strike. In France in 1920, the movement of agricultural workers and small leaseholders spread to 44 departments. The workers achieved wage increases and the leaseholders forced the landlords to sign lease agreements on easier terms. In January 1919 a peasant rising erupted in Bessarabia.

The struggle waged by the working people in capitalist countries, reflecting national conditions in each particular case, was international by its overall character and had several common features. One of its main elements was militant internationalist solidarity with revolutionary Russia and with the working people who rose up to take power in other countries. More than 400 Hands Off Russia committees, with the National Committee at the head, were formed in Britain. The British working people compelled the government to give up the policy of anti-Soviet armed intervention.

Mass actions of solidarity with Soviet Russia were staged by millions of working people in France and other capitalist countries. In some countries working-class action paralysed railway and sea transport, preventing the deliveries of weapons meant to be used against Soviet Russia.

In a number of countries money, medicines and food were collected to be sent to the Soviet people. In Bulgaria, 200 wagon-loads of grain were purchased with the money raised by the working people and delivered to the working people of the Volga Area.

Internationalist sentiment was spreading in the armies which traditionally had supported the exploiter regimes and had been used for suppressing revolutionary movements. For

the first time troops of several capitalist countries in large numbers joined the revolutionary movement. In April 1919, French sailors and soldiers in Sevastopol and Odessa disobeyed their commanders and refused to shoot at Russian workers. In Toulon, Brest and Toulouse, sailors and workers demanded an end to the intervention against Russia. Disturbances erupted among the troops of the British interventionists. The revolutionary movement spread to the armed forces of Austria, Bulgaria, Romania and other countries. As a result, the governments of France, Britain and other countries were forced to withdraw their troops from Russia.

The proletariat displayed solidarity with the peoples of other countries who struggled for power. In November 1918 a mass demonstration in support of the German revolution took place in Copenhagen. Strikes of solidarity with the Soviet republics established in Russia and Hungary were held in France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Romania and Norway in 1919. All these actions contributed to the cause of the incipient world revolution and dealt a powerful blow at chauvinism. They promoted the spread of proletarian internationalism and strengthened the international position of the first proletarian state.

During the struggle in support of the Soviet Republic, various contingents of the working class in capitalist countries united ever closer. That meant that *the October Revolution greatly increased the internationalism of the entire international working-class movement*. It helped to overcome the tide of national-chauvinism which had been set off by the apostasy of the right-wing social-democratic leaders during World War I. The revolution not only restored, but largely extended and consolidated the revolutionary ties among the working people in various countries.

*The Impact on the National Liberation and Labour Movement in Eastern Countries*

The October Revolution caused immense changes in the national liberation movement and breached the imperialist system of national oppression. One of the largest colonial empires, the empire of Russian tsarism, came tumbling down. The October Revolution demonstrated in practice the new proletarian policy towards the national liberation movement. Already in the Decree on Peace, the first decree issued by the Soviet state, the new proletarian power denounced a forceful joining of a small or weak nation to a big and strong state, unless this nation clearly expressed its willingness for this to be done. So the barbaric imperialist system of colonial oppression was condemned.

In January 1918, the Soviet Government adopted the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People, written by Lenin, announcing "a complete break with the barbarous policy of bourgeois civilisation, which has built the prosperity of the exploiters belonging to a few chosen nations on the enslavement of hundreds of millions of working people in Asia, in the colonies in general, and in the small countries".<sup>1</sup> In accordance with that Declaration, the Soviet Government cancelled all the inequitable treaties that had been imposed by the tsarist government on Asian countries.

Having thus emancipated the oppressed nations of tsarist Russia and offered an example of how complicated ethnic problems could be solved, the October Revolution gave a great impetus to the struggle against imperialism. That accelerated national liberation still more. Right after the October 1917 events, national liberation revolutions swept across nearly all countries in Asia and Africa where imperialism held sway.

In China, the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution was heralded by the "May 4, 1919 Movement", which began with the protests of Peking students against the decision of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 to preserve the semi-colonial status of China. The May 4, 1919 Movement grew into a nation-wide anti-imperialist and anti-feudal movement.

A popular rising broke out in Korea in March 1919. The Korean people rose against the Japanese aggressors, for national independence. The rising demonstrated a great revolutionary potential of the Korean people and helped the more progressive section of the people to see the need for organised struggle and for the formation of a revolutionary party.

In 1919, Afghanistan won independence. In 1919-1922, the Turkish people waged a national liberation war, known as the Kemalist Revolution. Supported by the first socialist state, Turkey defended its independence. In 1920-1921, an armed national and anti-imperialist struggle was going on in Iran. The battles fought by the peoples of Afghanistan, Turkey and Iran sapped the rule of imperialism in Eastern countries.

The October Revolution stimulated mass revolutionary action in India in 1919-1922. The powerful national liberation anti-British movement there was set off by the developments in Punjab in April 1919. On April 13, British general Reginald Dyer ordered to machine-gun the people who had gathered at a meeting in the Jalianwala Bagh Square in Am-

ritsar. More than a thousand people, including many women and children, were killed, and over two thousand were wounded. The people responded by rising against British tyranny. The workers, handicraftsmen, the petty bourgeoisie, intellectuals and peasants attacked police stations, post offices, and government establishments.

The disturbances in Punjab and other regions of India showed that the people were not satisfied with passive struggle methods advocated by the party of the national bourgeoisie—the National Congress. The popular masses already knew such methods of struggle as the general strike, political protest campaigns, non-cooperation with the colonial authorities, or taxes evasion.

The anti-imperialist mass movement erupted in Syria and Lebanon, where the guerrilla movement was widespread parallel with other forms of struggle. The national liberation movement assumed broad proportions in Egypt in 1918-1924. In March 1919, the struggle culminated in an armed rising. In some regions the peasants were setting up their own power bodies, giving them the Russian name "Soviets".

In 1921, a people's revolution won in Mongolia. The Mongolian people's army and Soviet troops together routed the counter-revolutionary armed forces and consolidated the victory of people's power. In 1924, Mongolia was proclaimed a people's republic. The Mongolian people, supported by the Soviet Union, demonstrated that it was possible to go over from a precapitalist stage of development to socialism, bypassing capitalism.

Soviet Russia extended invaluable practical assistance to the national liberation movement. Thus, at the request of the governments of Mongolia and Turkey, these countries were supported in their struggle against imperialism and domestic counter-revolution. Extensive aid was given to the Chinese people in their revolutionary struggle. In the subsequent years the Western proletariat, for its part, fought vigorously in defence of the right of colonial peoples to freedom and independence.

A new element of the liberation struggle in colonial and dependent countries was that the labour movement was developing there, growing into a major anti-imperialist force. At the time of the October Revolution the working class was not numerous in Asian and African countries. In India, for instance, factory workers and their families made up merely 1 per cent of the country's 300-million population; in Egypt there were 640,000 industrial workers, in China about 3 million, and in Turkey 100,000. The working class in the colonial countries had neither trade unions nor political parties, and was influenced by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois views. The

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 424.



overwhelming part of the working class consisted of workers employed at small handicraft factories.

The October Revolution had an immense impact on the working class and the labour movement in the colonial and dependent countries. It helped the growth of the popular movement, facilitated the spread of class awareness and made the proletariat better organised, giving the workers confidence in their strength.

This was seen in the upswing of the strike movement in 1918-1922. The strikes were militant, often growing into general strikes, with barricade battles and armed clashes with the police (as was the case, for instance, in Egypt in March 1919). The strikes of workers often merged with peasant actions in the rural regions near the cities, and with protest action by students and other young people in the cities.

In some countries (India, China, Egypt and the Philippines) the workers organised purely political actions: the strike of Bombay textile workers protesting against the visit to India by the Prince of Wales late in 1921, the general strike in Egypt in December 1921 in response to the publication of the draft of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement under which the British troops were to remain in the Suez Canal zone, the anti-imperialist strike in Shanghai in June 1919 in which 70,000 people took part, the printers' strike in the Philippines in 1920 in protest against the publication in the Manila press of articles insulting the national dignity of the Filipinos, and other actions.

Yet another result of the influence of the October Revolution on the labour movement in the colonial and dependent countries was the emergence of the trade union movement there. The All-Egypt Confederation of Labour comprising 100 trade unions with a membership of 60,000 was set up in 1921. In 1920, the All-India Trade Union Congress was founded. It included 64 unions with a total membership of 140,000. An organised labour movement emerged in China in 1920. In early 1922, the first All-China Trade Union Congress, held in Canton, was attended by delegates from 100 trade unions with a total membership of about 300,000 workers. The trade union federation, "Labour Movement Unity", was set up in Indonesia. In 1920, the federation comprised 22 unions of 72,000 workers. Those were the first steps of the trade union movement, the first attempts to bring an element of organisation into the workers' struggle and lend it a class character.

The wide scope of the national liberation movement in all colonial and dependent countries, the diverse forms of struggle, the firm determination of the popular masses to

fight to the victorious end—all this shows that *the October Revolution marked the onset of the crisis of the colonial system of imperialism and the start of an entirely new phase of the national liberation struggle, which became part of the world revolutionary process*. Lenin wrote: "The awakening of Asia and the beginning of the struggle for power by the advanced proletariat of Europe are a symbol of the new phase in world history that began early this century."<sup>1</sup>

#### *The Rise of the International Communist Movement*

The Great October Revolution signalled the start of an entirely new phase in the development of the organised international revolutionary proletarian movement. The victory of the revolution demonstrated to the working class in all countries how much important it was for it to have a militant revolutionary organisation, a vanguard adhering to Marxist-Leninist positions. It showed that the international working-class movement urgently needed a new, Leninist type of party, closely linked with the popular masses and fighting consistently for their interests.

The formation of communist parties, which began at that time, was a result of the evolution of internal conditions in capitalist countries, and not of some outside interference, as bourgeois ideologists allege. However, the October Revolution doubtlessly speeded up the formation of workers' revolutionary parties. After October 1917 the popular masses grew much more radicalised in all countries, and new, Marxist-Leninist groups were springing up within old social-democratic parties or outside them. Among these groups were the "narrow Socialists" in Bulgaria, the Spartacus League in Germany, the Committee for the Restoration of International Relations in France, and "L'ordine nuovo" in Italy to mention just a few. The names and practical goals of these groups were different, and their political prestige varied from country to country. But the fact of their emergence and growth was significant in itself. Those were the first bricks in the foundations of future communist parties.

Foreign communist groups in Russia, their members being former prisoners of war, soldiers of the foreign interventionist armies, who had gone over to the side of the revolution, foreign workers, etc., were an interesting form of organisation of Leninist internationalists. The foreign communist groups conducted extensive work among prisoners of war and among the interventionist troops. They also contributed a good deal to the activities of the internationalists.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Awakening of Asia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 86.

Later their members joined, as a rule, national communist parties.

The Hungarian, Romanian, German and Yugoslav groups (a Bulgarian group later emerging from the latter) of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) were formed and functioned in Soviet Russia in 1917-1920. That was followed by the formation of the Czechoslovak Communist group, the Anglo-French group, which soon split into the French and British groups (the latter transformed into the Anglo-American group), and also the Italian group of the RCP(B). All these groups united in the Central Federation of Foreign Groups in the RCP(B). The first chairman of the Central Federation was Bela Kun, a Hungarian revolutionary.

Apart from these groups, numerous organisations of Polish and Finnish Communists, the organisation Adalat of Iranian revolutionaries and a group of Turkish Communists functioned in Russia. Some time later, the All-Russia Union of Chinese Workers was founded. On its basis Chinese communist groups were set up in 1920.

The foreign communist groups were publishing their own newspapers and journals (about 159 of them). They were issued in 1917-1920 in Hungarian, Polish, German, Czech, Slovak, Romanian and French, in the languages of Yugoslavia, in Finnish, Bulgarian, English, Chinese and Farsi. Besides, they published leaflets in Japanese, Arabic, Turkish and in other languages.

In the first post-October years communist parties were formed only in a few countries. In 1918 they existed in Germany, Sweden, Argentina, Finland, Austria, the Netherlands, Hungary and Poland. The revolutionary wing grew stronger in the socialist parties of France, Italy, Britain, the USA, Spain, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Norway and Denmark. This was evidence that greater opportunities opened up for the formation of communist parties in most of the capitalist countries.

The emergence and growth of communist parties in colonial and dependent countries came as a natural result of the spread of the national liberation struggle, of the impact of the ideas and practical deeds of the October Revolution, and of the growth of the labour movement in those countries. After the October Revolution the ideas of socialism began to spread in the Eastern countries. The formation of communist parties in colonial and dependent countries marked the beginning of a higher phase in the national liberation and working-class movement. The communist parties of the Eastern countries were largely peasant parties. So communist theory and practice had to be adapted to the specific conditions in these countries and also to the special tasks confronting these parties.

In 1919 there emerged 6 communist parties (in Bulgaria, Denmark, Palestine, Mexico, the USA and Yugoslavia); in 1920, 9 parties (in Australia, Britain, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Iran, Spain, Turkey and Uruguay); in 1921, 12 parties (in Belgium, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Luxembourg, Mongolia, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, South Africa and Switzerland). Early in 1922, 37 communist parties functioned in the world.

So, the October Revolution heralded the start of what is now the international communist movement. Palmiro Togliatti once said: "Under the impact of the example of the victorious country of socialism, beginning with 1917 the vanguard of the working-class movement began to organise itself into communist parties, which set themselves the task of guiding the struggle of the working masses right to the winning of a new social order and a triumph of socialism in the whole world."

#### *A New Epoch of World History Begins*

The October Revolution not only directly influenced world development at that time. It is of epoch-making significance.

*The Great October Socialist Revolution, a turning point in world history, indicated the general direction of further world development and its deep-going basic tendencies.* It marked the start of the irreversible world process—the replacement of capitalism by a new, communist social and economic system.

The October Revolution epitomised the main laws governing social development, determining further social progress. What is more, it greatly influenced these laws, stimulating their development, and gave rise to new regularities, speeding up the historical process still more. All this caused great shifts in the entire world revolutionary process and changed its character and the conditions of its growth.

First, before the October Revolution the whole world lived in accordance with the laws governing the development of capitalist society, which determined the general course of world development. After the revolution a new, socialist system emerged side by side with capitalism. The Soviet Union, and then other socialist countries, came to live not according to the laws of capitalism, but in keeping with the internal regularities of the new mode of production. These socialist regularities have an ever greater role to play, and the sphere of their operation is expanding as world socialism gains new successes.

Second, considerable changes took place in capitalism itself under the influence of the October Revolution. Having



lost political and then economic monopoly, capitalism could no longer be what it used to be before the revolution. Already Marx noted that the laws of capitalism can be modified in their working by many circumstances.<sup>1</sup> The emergence of the new, socialist system meant that the sphere of operation of many laws of the capitalist system had narrowed down.

Third, the struggle between socialism and capitalism in the world arena became the pivot of the entire world development and inevitably gave rise to new laws determining the interaction of the two social systems. The effect of socialism on the world development has been growing constantly, while the influence of capitalism has been on the wane. This gives the revolutionary process more opportunities for growth.

Before the October Revolution the main social contradictions at the basis of the revolutionary process boiled down for the most part to the contradiction between labour and capital and by the contradiction between the colonial powers and their colonies, whereas after 1917 the revolutionary process was marked, apart from that, by the main contradiction between socialism and capitalism.

Before the October Revolution the world revolutionary process involved mainly the international working class and, to a smaller extent, the national liberation movement. As a result of the revolution, there emerged the third stream in the revolutionary process—the socialist system. The creative labour of the peoples who set out to build socialism became the major factor of social progress, of the cause of peace, democracy and socialism. The Soviet Union and then the countries of the socialist community became, on the one hand, the strong force opposed to world imperialism and, on the other, the material basis and the bastion of the world revolutionary process. The unity and interaction of these three components of the world revolutionary process have been characteristic of the entire epoch following October 1917.

*The modern epoch is the time of socialist and national liberation revolutions, of transition from capitalism to socialism and then on to communism, of historic competition and struggle between the two world social and political systems; the time of the collapse of the colonial system and of the struggle waged by the forces of socialism, the working-class and communist movement, the newly-free nations, and mass movements to defend peace and democracy from imperialism and its policy of aggression and oppression.*

The entire course of historical development confirms that

the path indicated by the October Revolution is the only correct way for all countries. In the past half-century the nations with more than one-third of the world population have embarked on this path. They have impressive achievements in building a new life. Ever more nations on every continent have set out to achieve the ideal created by the October Revolution.

The October Revolution is a great feat accomplished by the Soviet people. It is also the gain of the entire revolutionary and communist movement, an embodiment of the age-old striving of mankind for the noble ideals of peace, labour, freedom, equality, brotherhood and happiness for all nations.

<sup>1</sup>See Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 603.

## Chapter Six

### *The Communist International. The Struggle for the Leninist Principles of Strategy and Tactics*

The situation at the time urgently demanded that the Third, Communist International be set up. The Great October Revolution quickened the wiping out of the aftermath of the treacherous policies of the chauvinist leaders of the Second International and rallied the young Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations of internationalist revolutionaries. The new historical epoch placed new demands on them. They had to consolidate their ranks organisationally and ideologically, enhance their role as the vanguard, and build closer ties with the popular masses. The international working-class movement had to be united on Marxist-Leninist principles.

The way the Communist International was set up in March 1919, and its activities during the first, Leninist, period are quite instructive. The experience gained during that period was rich and diverse. In this chapter we shall examine only its most important aspects. They are:

—The conditions and factors that made it imperative that the Communist International be founded.

—The need to fuse Marxism-Leninism with the working-class movement, and the elaboration by Marxism-Leninism of scientific strategy and tactics, the ways of strengthening revolutionary parties, and the principles of their work among the masses.

—The struggle against opportunism in the working-class and communist movement, and the ways of overcoming the infantile disorder of “left-wing” communism which might prove tenacious under definite circumstances.

—The problem of combining firm principles and flexible tactics for building broad-based workers’ unity and the unity of national liberation and democratic movements.

—The effectiveness of broad alliances, the tactics of partial goals, transitional phases and temporary allies, and the need of uniting the working-class and national liberation movements and gradually turning them into an effective factor of class struggle on a world scale.

—Finally, a most important task of combining the revolutionary class struggle with the struggle for peace and disarmament as the ideal of socialism.

#### *1. The Objective Need and Conditions for Setting Up the Third International*

Bourgeois and social-reformist propaganda today alleges that the Communist International was set up only on the insistence of the Bolsheviks as a “hand of Moscow”, so that they could strengthen their positions at the expense of internationalist solidarity. And it portrays Lenin as an evil splitter who had exploded the Second International from within and from outside.

But the facts prove it beyond any doubt that it was right-wing opportunist leaders of the Second International who were the real splitters of the working-class movement in the early 20th century. This has already been mentioned when the causes of the collapse of the Second International were examined. Indeed, even before World War I, social-reformism, which had gained the upper hand in most parties of the Second International, was splitting the working-class movement. That gave rise to division between the revolutionaries and reformists. When the war began, this process grew into a sharp conflict between the Social-Chauvinists, who advocated the policy of “class peace”, and the Marxist revolutionaries both within the Second International and in each of its parties.

So, during the imperialist war the long-fermenting conflict in the working-class movement and in the Second International between the right-wing opportunists and internationalist revolutionaries burst open and acquired a clear political meaning. The Centrists<sup>1</sup>, who opposed war only in words, sought to maintain unity with the Social-Chauvinists and to save them from moral and political ruin. The monopoly bourgeoisie, for its part, got an opportunity to widen the split in the working-class movement. Precisely then it tried especially hard to persuade the opportunist leaders of right-wing social-democracy to accept the idea of class peace and collaboration on the basis of chauvinistic programmes. In the major European countries the social-chau-

<sup>1</sup> Among the Centrists were: Karl Kautsky, Hugo Haase, Georg Ledebour (Germany), Friedrich Adler (Austria), Jean Longuet, Adrien Pressemane (France), James Ramsay MacDonald, Philip Snowden (Britain), Lev Martov, Leon Trotsky (Russia), Filippo Turati, Emmanuele Modigliani (Italy), Morris Hillquit (USA), Robert Grimm (Switzerland), and others.



vinist leaders of the Second International<sup>1</sup> were intensively adapting their policies to the political interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie.

In that situation Lenin arrived at this conclusion: "Today, following 1914, unity of the proletarian struggle for the socialist revolution demands that the workers' parties separate themselves completely from the parties of the opportunists."<sup>2</sup> The Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) circulated in November 1914 the Manifesto, written by Lenin, who set forth the objective need for founding a new and truly proletarian International cleansed of opportunism.

In early 1915, advanced European workers showed the first signs of recovery from the confusion into which they had been thrown by the betrayal of the right-opportunist wing of social democracy. The delimitation process within social-democratic parties gained momentum, and some, initially small, groups began rejecting their social-chauvinist leaders in favour of revolutionary ideas, and revolutionary leaders. This process soon developed into an anti-war proletarian movement, opposed to social-chauvinism. That created social and political conditions for setting up a new International, because the previous one proved incapable of exercising leadership of the revolutionary-minded parties. There was the objective need for the international unity of the working-class movement, and there was a greater striving for restoring contacts between the workers of various countries, including the belligerent ones.

A most important development was that that internationalist movement was embodied, ideologically and organisationally, in the group called the *Zimmerwald Left* which formed during the international socialist conference held in September 1915 in Zimmerwald, Switzerland. The Zimmerwald Left included the Bolsheviks, Polish left-wing revolutionaries, Lettish Social Democrats, and the left-wing elements of the social-democratic parties of Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and Germany. Later it was joined by the left-wing Socialists of the Netherlands, Serbia, France, Bulgaria, Austria and the United States.

The Zimmerwald Left grew ideologically mature when it

<sup>1</sup>Most of the Second International leaders adhered to social-chauvinist positions: Friedrich Ebert, Philipp Scheidemann (Germany), Viktor Adler (Austria), Pierre Renaudel, Jules Guesde, Marcel Sembat (France), Henry M. Hyndman (Britain), Georgy Plekhanov (Russia), Leonida Bissolati (Italy), Emile Vandervelde (Belgium), Hjalmar Branting (Sweden), and others. In France, Belgium, Britain and some other countries the Social-Chauvinists became members of bourgeois governments.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "What Next?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 111.

came up with its own draft resolutions and Manifesto, which were based on Lenin's conclusion that the world war had created a revolutionary situation in Europe and that it was therefore the duty of the revolutionaries "to explain to the masses the need for revolution, call for it, create the necessary organisations".<sup>1</sup> It was ultimately established organisationally when it elected its bureau with Lenin at the head. In the subsequent period the Zimmerwald Left consolidated their positions at the second conference held in April 1916 in Kintal, Switzerland.

The last but not least precondition for setting up the Third International was that, as the war was drawing to a close, communist parties and groups already operated in many countries. Their aim was to lead the mass movement of working people to a revolution, and to unite internationally.<sup>2</sup>

The October Revolution in Russia stimulated the working people's drive for revolutionary change in society, for national liberation and for promoting internationalism, which thus opened up new opportunities for the growth of the international movement of Marxist-Leninists, for setting up the Third International. Having confirmed the correctness of the revolutionary path indicated by Lenin, it greatly speeded up the separation of the right-wing opportunist and the revolutionary trends. The prestige of Leninism and the Bolshevik Party in the international working-class and national liberation movement increased immensely. This promoted the formation of workers' parties of the new type.

The establishment of Soviet power in Russia in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the mounting class struggle in capitalist countries frightened the imperialist bourgeoisie. It responded by launching an armed intervention against Soviet Russia and simultaneously sought ways and means of suppressing the revolutionary trends in national working-class movements that were dangerous to it.

In that situation the fledgling communist parties and the communist groups, which had yet to become parties, were faced with the task of uniting to produce a common strategy

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Revolutionary Marxists at the International Socialist Conference, September 5-8, 1915", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup>Apart from the party of Russian Bolsheviks the revolutionary internationalists were joined by Bulgarian Tesnyaki (Workers' Social-Democratic Party of Bulgaria) (Dmitri Blagoyev, Georgy Dimitrov, Georgy Kirkov, and Vasil Kolarov), the German Left (Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring), Serbian Socialists (F. Filipovic, Dusan Popovic, and Trisha Katzlerovic), Polish left-wing Social Democrats (Jakub Hanecki and Alfred Warski), Lettish Social Democrats (J. Berzin), Dutch Tribunists (Anton Pannekoek and David Wynkoop), and the left Socialists of Sweden, Norway, Italy, Austria-Hungary, France, Britain, the USA, Chile, Argentina, South Africa, Japan, Denmark, Switzerland, and some other countries.

and tactic of working-class struggle against imperialism, for power, for peace, and in defence of Soviet Russia—the main outpost of the world socialist revolution. Lenin maintained that it was necessary to set up an effective international proletarian organisation without haste, and without delay. That was what the entire working-class movement needed at the moment.

*Marxism-Leninism Fused with the Working-Class Movement  
on a World Scale. The First Congress of the Communist International*

The fledgling parties felt they needed an international organisation that would help them master revolutionary theory and elaborate a scientifically substantiated policy. Moreover, they needed international support. Without that they could hardly become an independent and truly national force capable of rebuffing both the bourgeois and the opportunists. All the more so, since the social-reformist parties tried to anticipate the developments and prevent the setting up of the Third International, attempting to form their own International on opportunist principles. The splitting tactics they employed a month before the formation of the Communist International were most revealing. Early in February 1919, they convened a conference of right-wing social-democratic parties and announced the formation of the so-called Bern International. The aim of that action was simultaneously to hamstring the future Third International and to consolidate the union of the right-wing, social-reformist forces on the anti-revolutionary and anti-Soviet platform.

In that situation it was in the interest of the working people to found an international proletarian organisation as soon as possible, which would fuse Marxism-Leninism with the working-class movement on an international scale and revive revolutionary proletarian internationalism.

The Third International became such an organisation. Its constituent congress, held in early March 1919 in Moscow, was attended by 52 delegates from 35 organisations in 21 countries of Europe, America and Asia. For the first time the delegates of the oppressed peoples of the East (Iran, China, Korea and Turkey) took part in the formation of a workers' International.

The First Congress decided that the Third International would bear the name Communist. It discussed and approved a number of important documents which initiated the fusion of Marxist-Leninist theory with the revolutionary working-class movement in the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism.

The fusion itself, its methods and the succession of ideo-

logical, organisational and political actions have been an inestimable contribution to the general wealth of experience of the revolutionary proletarian movement.

It was necessary, in the first place, to specify the common platform of young revolutionary parties. All the more so, since they had to draw a clear distinction in theoretical and political terms between their platform and the reformism of the right-wing opportunist parties which tried, right after the war, to restore the Second International on a slightly modified basis. The platform of the Communist International adopted by its First Congress was based mainly on the chief propositions of Lenin's doctrine on imperialism and the theory of socialist revolution, and also on Lenin's definition of the new epoch as the epoch of "dissolution of capitalism" and the *communist revolution of the proletariat*.<sup>1</sup> By contrast with the reformist slogans, that platform envisaged the winning of political power by the working class and the establishment of proletarian dictatorship.

The first document of the Communist International said a proletarian revolution could win only if a mass struggle was launched and an alliance between the working class and the poor peasants was built. The popular masses could not be stirred to action so long as the organisational ties with the right-wing Social Democrats and the Kautskyite "centre" remained unbroken. The platform again proclaimed the principle of proletarian internationalism and said the Communist International was determined to "support the exploited colonial peoples in their struggles against imperialism".<sup>2</sup>

Since the dictatorship of the proletariat was the key issue in breaking away from the social-reformists, the Congress decided to devote a special document to it: Lenin's "Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat". To win the masses over to the side of the revolutionary parties of the proletariat, they had to be freed, in the first place, from the influence of the reformist ideologists who equated the dictatorship of the proletariat with "dictatorship in general", and bourgeois democracy with "pure democracy". Lenin stressed in his report that only a class approach to "democracy" and "dictatorship" can be scientific. Speaking about the historical inevitability of the dictatorship of the proletariat, he emphasised: "Proletarian dictatorship is not only an absolutely legitimate means of overthrowing the exploiters and suppressing their resistance, but also absolutely necessary to the entire mass of working people, being their

<sup>1</sup> *The Communist International, 1919-1943. Documents. Selected and edited by Jane Degras. Vol. 1: 1919-1922, Oxford University Press, London—New York—Toronto, 1956, p. 18.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.



only defence against the bourgeois dictatorship.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin explained that the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, the political power of the exploited class, differs essentially from the dictatorship of feudal lords, aristocrats, landowners and capitalists, that is, the exploiter classes. The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is suppression of the working majority of a nation, while the dictatorship of the proletariat is suppression of the resistance put up by the insignificant minority—a handful of exploiters. Therefore the dictatorship of the working class is provision of the widest (in a class society) democracy for the vast majority of the people.

"Soviet power in Russia, the Rate-System in Germany, the Shop Stewards Committees in Britain and similar Soviet institutions in other countries, all this implies and presents to the toiling classes, i.e., the vast majority of the population, greater practical opportunities for enjoying democratic rights and liberties than ever existed before, even approximately, in the best and the most democratic bourgeois republics."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin maintained that the Soviets were not the only possible form of the power of the working class and its allies. In conditions different from those in Russia, he said, it was possible that various forms of proletarian dictatorship, and, correspondingly, of democracy, could be established. In saying so, he referred to the Paris Commune.

The main propositions of Lenin's "Theses and Report" and of the other documents adopted at the First Congress are well applicable today as well. One of them, for instance, is the thesis that the essence of bourgeois democracy, however broad, is always the same, for it is always used for suppressing the working class and other categories of wage workers by a few exploiters. Lenin showed the absurdity of the reformist concepts of "pure democracy" and the "supraclass" character of the bourgeois-democratic state in the conditions when the main levers of real power are in the hands of big monopoly capital. It is appropriate to recall in this context the many years' rule of Swedish Social Democrats, as a result of which, as they themselves admit, Swedish state-monopoly capitalism has grown even more powerful.

Another thesis says that one must be able clearly to discriminate between "bourgeois democracy" as an instrument of class dictatorship and general democratic rights and liberties gained by the working people in a stubborn class struggle in a bourgeois republic. The democratic rights and lib-

erties are a general democratic gain and a major initial staging-ground in the fight for democracy as part of the struggle for socialism. Therefore the efforts to increase and consolidate the general democratic gains are a major milestone on the path towards socialism.

Both these theses are most helpful today for a correct critical assessment of, for instance, various concepts rejecting the dictatorship of the proletariat and laying emphasis not on the struggle for the power of the working class and its allies, but on political pluralism, on the legality of bourgeois opposition and on the principle of "rotation" of left- and right-wing parties in power.

For this reason the resolution on Lenin's "Report" passed at the First Congress of the Communist International is just as topical today, for it said the communist parties should explain to the working class and the working people in general the character of and need for new proletarian democracy which should replace bourgeois democracy.

On the whole, the experience gained during that period in the history of the Communist International tells us that to fully restore the revolutionary principles of the movement, especially on the international scale, an ideological struggle must be waged above all against right-wing opportunism. This struggle requires an organisational unity of the communist parties, and an expansion of their social base, and their ever stronger ties with the popular masses.

## *2. Organisational Consolidation of the Communist International. The Struggle Against Right- and Left-Wing Opportunism*

After the First Congress of the Communist International there began a rapid rise and growth of communist parties. That process was hard, and the young parties came up against numerous obstacles on their path. They were confronted with at least two groups of difficulties. On the one hand, the communist parties had to wage struggle against experienced reformist parties, which were then supported by the majority of the West European working class. On the other hand, the going over from the phase of recruiting new members from among advanced workers and intellectuals to winning over broad masses of working people was greatly impeded by "left"-opportunist mistakes.

In 1920, the Second Comintern Congress adopted a series of measures to organisationally strengthen the Communist International. As a result, it became a revolutionary organisation of the new type. Those measures were, especially at the

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "First Congress of the Communist International, March 2-6, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 463.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 465.

beginning, aimed at consolidating victory over social-reformism, preventing the infiltration of right-wing opportunist and centrist elements in the Comintern and guarding it against the influence of reformist ideology.

The Second Congress approved the Statute of the Communist International, announcing its goals and laying down its set-up and organisational principles. The Comintern operated on the principle of democratic centralism, representing "a single universal Communist party, of which the parties operating in every country form individual sections", with the Profintern (Red International of Labour Unions), the Young Communist International and some other international organisations affiliated to it.

The Comintern's supreme body was its annual World Congress, which determined the programme of the International, decided the more important questions of programme and tactics, fixed the number of deciding votes, and elected the Executive Committee (ECCI). The latter guided all of the Comintern's activities in the intervals between World Congresses, published *The Communist International* journal, drew up appeals and directives for the Comintern's sections and, when necessary, set up its own executive bureaux in individual groups of countries.

The Statute envisaged also the right of the member-organisations to decide practical political matters independently, with due account of the general guidelines. Lenin, who became, in fact, the commonly recognised leader of the Third International, stressed that the communist movement needed "new and different parties..., parties that will be in constant and real contact with the masses and will be able to lead those masses".<sup>1</sup>

Therefore he demanded from the outset that local conditions be taken duly into account, national specifics respected, the commanding style of leadership discarded, and collective decision-making taken.

At the same time, in the initial years stricter centralisation was absolutely necessary to compensate for definite weaknesses of the nascent communist parties, help them grow independent and guard them against the subversive and corrupting influence of opportunism.

This practice of quick and clear delimitation with the reformists in the conditions of revolutionary upswing is of great value for identical or similar situations that can arise today. Such profound delimitation, which, according to Lenin, can be the only condition for a future unification, or at

least for effective joint actions, required a whole series of ideological, organisational and political measures to be taken. Most important among them was the adoption by the Second Comintern Congress of the document known as "21 Conditions of Admission to the Communist International". It was in fact an epitome of all ideological, tactical and organisational principles of a new-type party. The most important of them were: complete rupture with reformism and "centrist" (Kautskyite) policies; recognition of proletarian dictatorship in principle; party building on principles of democratic centralism; regular work in the countryside, in the army, in reformist trade unions, and in bourgeois parliaments; internationalist support of each socialist republic; obligation of each party to comply with the decisions taken at Comintern congresses and plenary meetings and by its leading bodies.

The latter and some other conditions closely associated with the prevailing situation were of special significance only at the time. Their aim was to guard the Comintern against opportunist groups and tendencies which could weaken it. Later on, some of the conditions were eased or otherwise modified to suit the changed conditions of the struggle and the functioning of the Comintern.

Most valuable today is the experience of the Comintern's struggle against "left-wing" opportunist menace. An outstanding role in this struggle was played by Lenin, who aptly identified the menace as "left-wing" communism—an infantile disorder". That disorder was growing progressively worse in the initial post-revolutionary years. That is why the Second Congress stressed the importance and urgency of overcoming the "left-wing" opportunist distortions and the sectarian narrow attitude of the "left" Communists to organise the struggle to win over the masses, and allies. Without that one could not expect successfully to combat social-reformism, the main obstacle in the way of the revolutionary movement.

At the time it was more than just combating the infantile disorder of "left-wing" Communists—the alignment of class forces and the general social and political conditions were beginning to change in the capitalist countries. In those countries the decline in the revolutionary movement, the spread of state-monopoly tendencies, and the strengthening of positions of reactionary forces gave rise to complex processes.

In those conditions social-reformism was degenerating into conciliation with the new ruling bourgeois quarters who, for their part, were compelled to take a liberal, bourgeois-reformist course. At times, when the situation grew tense, right-wing and liberal Social Democrats joined hands to oppose revolutionary actions by the working class.

However, Lenin managed to discern these tendencies at the

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 236.



very outset and saw that the split in the working class was far deeper, which was dangerous in that it strengthened the positions of the liberal and bourgeois-reformist wing of the capitalist class, and the positions of social-reformists. Some leaders of communist parties and individual groups of Communists assumed sectarian attitudes, and so no tactics of winning over the masses and setting up effective alliances between the working class and other sections of the working people were elaborated, and the bourgeois-reformist strategists of the ruling classes availed themselves of that. All this led Lenin to the conclusion that the concept of storming capitalism directly should be abandoned in favour of tactics of attaining partial goals and going through transition phases, in favour of the search after other "forms of the *transition* or the *approach* to the proletarian revolution".<sup>1</sup>

*The Significance of Lenin's "Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder*

Precisely at that period, when the intensive study of the changing conditions was under way and a new concept of revolutionary struggle was searched after, Lenin wrote one of his most important works—*"Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder* (April-May 1920). In it he set forth the principles of the theory, strategy and tactics of the communist movement in general and in the new conditions in particular, principles that are of unfading importance. Precisely these problems were in focus at the Second Comintern Congress, held in the summer of 1920. *"Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder* had a historic role to play in the shaping of communist parties, properly equipping them with theoretical knowledge. It was the first Marxist work which told the Communists in other countries about what was most significant in the political experience of the Russian Revolution, and helped them produce their own strategy and tactics.

By so naming his book Lenin wanted to stress how important it was to fight against "Left doctrinairism", which at that time threatened to sweep the whole movement. Examining a problem he criticised, above all, the ultra-left attitudes which were "in" at the time, and he did it convincingly, drawing on most typical facts. In this respect, the book is a scientific analysis and a summing up of the "left" opportunist concepts and actions, and the ways of combating them in the framework of a common strategy. Analysing the erroneous ultra-left views and applying the method of "carrying

it to the point of absurdity" and "the rule of contraries", Lenin formulated a system of common basic laws, principles and practical recommendations for the revolutionary struggle for socialism in the new epoch.

Lenin's book by far exceeded the limits of the subject of "left-wing" communism, and the limits of that time. Today, it is a desk book of any revolutionary who thinks in creative and realistic terms, a guide in the strategy and tactics of struggle for a socialist revolution.

As for "left-wing" communism proper, Lenin defined it as a variety of "left" opportunism, as a display of a doctrinaire attitude, dogmatism and sectarianism, as replacement of the revolutionary cause by slap-bang revolutionary verbiage behind which there is an inability to understand the laws governing the struggle for socialism and the need to develop theory in keeping with changing conditions.

Lenin showed in his book that leftist disregard for the task of winning the confidence of large sections of working people inevitably leads to isolation from the masses, to sectarianism and, consequently, to political adventurism. It is impossible to ensure the victory of the vanguard in a revolution, he said, "without the liquidation of Left doctrinairism, and without a full elimination of its errors".<sup>1</sup> This has been confirmed repeatedly by the history of the working-class movement. At the time, Lenin's struggle against the "Left" doctrinaires in the nascent communist movement and his style of work with them were particularly instructive in that he managed to treat the "infantile disorder" by combining sharp criticism with friendly polemics. Lenin used the profound critical analysis of "Left" Communists' mistakes and a comradely discussion of problems to help the cadres mature ideologically at an earlier date, and elaborate a common platform.

As regards redirecting the revolutionary movement and formulating a new concept of the strategic aspect, Lenin insisted that the masses which had fallen under the influence of bourgeois-democratic and reformist illusions should be won over. Agitation alone, he said, was not enough to stir a large part of the working people to accomplish a revolution. He wrote: "For that, the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions."<sup>2</sup> To enable the masses to gain that experience, the communist parties had to come up with slogans taking into account the real level of mass consciousness, political traditions, and the specifics of social movements in a given country. Such slogans could be advanced only if the social

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 92.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

and political reality was approached in a scientific way.

That is why Lenin demanded that politics be approached as a science and as an art, saying that the parties should train their own researchers and theorists. To approach revolutionary policy as a science is to elaborate the strategy and tactics of parties on scientific principles, the principles of scientific socialism, the theory of socialist revolution; this implies a strict account of a whole range of factors, objective and subjective, internal and external. To approach revolutionary policy as an art is to develop a political intuition which would enable one to take into account such important factors as the real alignment of class forces at a given moment, and petty-bourgeois, opportunist sentiments. Besides, this implies the ability to manoeuvre, to make a compromise, and even to retreat in an organised way. The art of political leadership is the ability to master "all forms or aspects of social activity without exception",<sup>1</sup> and to use all forms of struggle; it is preparedness "for the most rapid and brusque replenishment of one form by another".<sup>2</sup>

Lenin saw the main problem in correctly applying the main revolutionary principles to the conditions in a given country at a given time, that is, to the historical, economic and cultural-ethnic specifics which the Communists "must be able to discover, study, and predict".<sup>3</sup> Lenin stressed that the common international tactics demand such an application of the fundamental principles to national conditions that would correctly modify these principles in certain particulars.<sup>4</sup> Therefore special forms of transition and approach of the masses to the revolution should be sought in each country.

Lenin paid great significance to a scientific approach to elaborating the strategy and tactics of the communist movement and urged Communists thoroughly to analyse the objective and subjective conditions and factors, the alignment of class and political forces and the real possibilities and tendencies of development in their countries. A revolutionary determination of the vanguard was not enough, he warned. Proceeding from Marx' idea that revolution is the movement of the masses themselves, and analysing the experience of the revolutions in Russia and in Europe, he formulated the main law of the socialist revolution: "for a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place it is es-

sential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the 'lower classes' do not want to live in the old way and the 'upper classes' cannot carry on in the old way that the revolution can triumph. This truth can be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without a nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters)."<sup>1</sup>

In this context the following important idea of Lenin's is topical today: objective factors and spontaneous protest by the working people are not enough for the victory of a revolution—there must be also subjective factors, like preparedness of the advanced class for long and stubborn struggle, and ability of the vanguard to lead this struggle; and bold and resolute revolutionary actions should enjoy popular support.

Lenin stressed the important problem of the proletariat's allies. He said that Communists should learn to use the slightest contradiction among their enemies in order to win over a mass ally to their side, "even though this ally is temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who do not understand this reveal a failure to understand even the smallest grain of Marxism, of modern scientific socialism in general."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin formulated the principles of the Communists' work among the masses, principles which have become classical today:

- to work among the masses wherever they are;
- not to advance slogans in which no account is taken of the level of mass consciousness, historical and political traditions, national sentiments and customs;
- to teach the masses by their own experience;
- to learn the art of compromise and agreement for uniting all forces under the banner of revolution, and boldly to enter into alliances with various parties of workers and small proprietors;
- to learn to quickly find one's bearings in a fluid political situation, to change tactics, replace one form of struggle by another, and be able to use all methods of revolutionary work.

Having defined the communist party as the highest form of proletarian class organisation,<sup>3</sup> Lenin stated categorically that it could effectively solve the problems confronting it only if it constantly maintained close ties with the masses. He insisted at the same time that a party should be self-critical and pointed out that its attitude towards its own mis-

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 84-85.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 70-71.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 50.



takes was the surest way of judging how earnest the party was. This moreover was a powerful means of educating the working class and the broad masses in general.<sup>1</sup>

So in that period, which saw the beginning of a decline of revolutionary activity, the consistent revolutionary Marxists united round Lenin and sought to guard the revolutionary movement against the right-wing opportunist influence, to prevent the spread of ultra-left danger among the Communists, and to win the masses over to the side of the revolutionary vanguard. The developments of that period tell us that precisely in the struggle against the tide of "left-wing" doctrinairism was the Leninist concept of strategy and tactics being gradually improved.

### *3. Triumph of the Leninist Principles of Strategy and Tactics*

The cardinal problems of communist strategy and tactics were discussed at the Second, Third and Fourth congresses of Comintern; at times they caused heated debates. Thus the foundation of the strategy and tactics of the communist movement in the new epoch were laid in Lenin's time, with his active participation, and owing to his personal contribution and to his uninterrupted contacts with outstanding leaders of the communist movement.

The main tasks confronting the delegates of the Second Comintern Congress, held in July and August, 1920, were to assess the revolutionary prospects and determine how a revolution should be prepared for.

In his draft report to the Congress, Lenin wrote: "not speeding up a revolution, but speeding up preparations for a revolution".<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, that was a confirmation of the main strategic course towards a systematic and all-round preparation of the proletariat for a future revolution; and on the other hand, it was a call always to remember the basic proposition that the subject of revolution is the proletarian masses themselves, that the socialist revolution, just as the building of socialism, is the object of the creative endeavour of the working people, and that "the proletariat becomes revolutionary only insofar as it does not restrict itself to the narrow framework of craft interests, only when in all matters and spheres of public life, it acts as the

leader of all the toiling and exploited masses".<sup>1</sup>

Hence Lenin's call, which became the motto of that Congress, was: "Deeper into the masses!", "In closer contact with the masses!".<sup>2</sup> In those slogans Lenin saw a sure means of real (not illusory) acceleration of a revolution led by the proletariat.

Besides, it was necessary to uphold in the Comintern the idea of the active, guiding and organising role of the party as the indispensable condition of exercising hegemony by the proletariat. The anarcho-syndicalists of Spain, France, Germany and some other countries denied the leading role of the communist party during preparations for a revolution, because, they alleged, any political party was a vestige of the bourgeois system and spontaneous action by the masses was a sine qua non of a revolution. To back up their assertion they referred to the bourgeois degeneration of right-wing social-democracy.

At the same time, the delegates of the centrist parties at the Congress insisted that the Comintern should admit to its membership parties representing various social trends, on the basis of a broad ideological platform. They recommended that a common political position be elaborated through reaching agreement among all those trends.

The Second Congress rejected those opportunist ideas, which could only weaken the Comintern and turn it into a debating club. The young communist parties responded to the call to go "deeper into the masses" and establish closer contacts with them. But in practice they came up against great obstacles erected in a number of countries by "left-wing" Communists who did not wish to give up their positions. This is evidenced, for instance, by the experience of the United Communist Party of Germany (UCPG). It sent an Open Letter of its Central Committee to all workers' organisations on January 7, 1921, to their parties and trade unions, including the reformist ones, proposing joint actions against big business and the capitalist state so as to achieve immediate goals. The dictatorship of the proletariat was no longer advanced as a preliminary condition for agreement on joint actions in order to achieve a wider unification of forces. No agreement was reached, however, because the reformist Social-Democratic Party of Germany (SDPG) did not believe in the sincerity of the UCPG Central Committee, and the ultra-left Communist Labour Party of Germany (CLPG)

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, Politizdat, Moscow, 1963, p. 455 (in Russian).

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 194.

<sup>2</sup>*Theses and Statutes of the IIIrd Communist International Adopted by the 11th Congress, July 17th-August 7th, 1920*, Publishing Office of the C.I., Moscow, 1920, pp. 17-18.

regarded the new tactics as a slide down to right-wing opportunist positions. Besides, the UCPG itself was not unanimous on the issue.

In those conditions the ultra-left described the joint-action tactics proposed in the Open Letter as opportunism and on their insistence the most consistent advocates of these tactics (Clara Zetkin and others) had to leave the Central Committee.

The new leadership challenged the Open Letter with a whole "theory of offensive". But in the country as a whole the working class was not ready to fight for power, and it refused to support not only the slogan of toppling the government, but even the Communists' call for a general strike. Such ultra-left adventurism ensured the success of the police action to provoke a premature armed action by the workers so as to disarm them, weaken their organisations and deepen the divisions among them. The provocative action led to a heavy defeat of the workers of middle Germany: about four thousand activists were imprisoned or sentenced to different terms of hard labour.

Lenin was very much concerned over the outbreak of "left-wing" communism. He gave full support to the Open Letter and put it straight that the UCPG with its "theory of offensive" had yielded to a provocation, that it could not win unless it won popular support. Preparing for the Third Comintern Congress and critically reviewing the initial draft thesis on tactics, drawn up in the spirit of the "theory of offensive", Lenin made the following marginal notes as he formulated the main points of his answer to the ultra-left: "the winning of workers' majority"; "directly for the 'Offener Brief' (Open Letter)"; "in all events to insist on winning the majority in the trade unions (against the ultra-left)".<sup>1</sup>

The Third Comintern Congress (June 22—July 12, 1921) took these recommendations of Lenin's fully into account. Lenin spoke three times at the Congress, which, attended by delegates from 108 organisations in 52 countries, can well be called a world forum. Accordingly, in its documents the Congress formulated the chief task of the Communists in capitalist countries during a transition from the storming to a siege: "to conduct, extend, widen and unite the present defensive fight of the proletariat and sharpen it towards the final political struggle in accordance with the course of evolution". It was stressed, at the same time, that in any event the communist party "must be the *party of action*", stand at the head of the fighting masses, train the

masses to manoeuvre effectively, and equip them with new methods of struggle.<sup>1</sup>

During the debate on the draft Thesis on Tactics, an argument erupted in the special commission of the Third Congress over whether it was necessary to wait until the *majority* of the proletariat would be won over for the revolution. In the opinion of Umberto Terracini (Italy), who spoke on behalf of ultra-left delegates, the principle of necessarily winning over the majority was good for reformists and therefore it "could not be put into a Thesis presented to the Communist International".<sup>2</sup> Replying to him, Lenin pointed out the extreme danger for the Comintern of the calls to give up the idea of winning the majority and to renounce the tactics proposed in the Open Letter, which offered, in his opinion, an "example" to follow. According to Lenin, those calls were most dangerous for Europe where nearly all the workers were organised and where it was impossible to win unless the majority was won over.<sup>3</sup>

The Thesis formulated a number of the initial principles of the policy of a united workers' front. The Thesis raised the question of allies, in particular the need for alliance with the middle strata, even when these strata were not free from petty-bourgeois illusions. The congress delegates focused also on the Communists' work in the trade unions, cooperatives, and in the women's and youth movements.

Taking into account the experience of the struggle in the post-October 1917 period, Lenin advanced the idea that the world revolution was turning increasingly into a long-term worldwide process, in which the solidarity of the oppressed peoples with the victorious socialist revolution was growing stronger. "The decay of capitalism, and the concentration of the revolutionary energy of the proletariat, its organisation into an aggressive, victorious power," the Thesis said, "will require a *prolonged period* of revolutionary struggle."<sup>4</sup>

Lenin believed that the documents adopted at the Third Congress marked the turning point in the development of the Comintern. In his opinion, they heralded the end of the initial period in its development on the way towards a revolutionary mass party. An important goal of the Congress was to end

<sup>1</sup> *Third World Congress of the Communist International, June 22nd-July 12th, 1921. Theses and Resolutions*, Contemporary Publishing Association, New York, 1921, pp. 32, 33.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Working-Class Movement*, Vol. 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1984, p. 539.

<sup>3</sup> See V.I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 470.

<sup>4</sup> *Third World Congress of the Communist International... Theses and Resolutions*, p. 35.

<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 44, Politizdat, Moscow, 1964, p. 435 (in Russian).



with the illusions of "left Communists" who believed that the communist movement in 1921 had reached the crest of the second revolutionary wave, and that the victory of a world revolution depended solely on the will of the party. It was necessary to change radically the attitude to the masses and to rectify the leftist exaggeration of the danger of centrism because all that threatened to turn revolutionary Marxism into a caricature, and the struggle against centrism into its opposite, that is, into saving it.

Lenin described these main tasks of the Third Congress as "a *straightening out* of the line of the Communist International".<sup>1</sup> The accomplishment of this task, which practically was tantamount to implementing the slogan of "going into the masses", was expected to speed up the elaboration of the policy of the united workers' front. That was a substantial change in policy, directing the communist parties towards joint actions with the social-reformist parties to meet the immediate demands of the workers. The chief task then was to draw the workers in the struggle, so that the struggle itself would lead the workers to the conclusion that reformism was limited and it was necessary therefore to go over to a political struggle for power. At the same time, it was stressed that the communist parties should remain independent.

The problem of the united workers' front very soon (in the spring of 1922) acquired an international practical significance. An event took place which considerably enriched the experience of the revolutionary working-class movement: on January 19, 1922, the Bureau of the Vienna International ("Two-and-a-Half International") proposed to the Second and Third Internationals to convene a conference of all workers' parties, that is, a conference of the three Internationals, in the spring of 1922 in Berlin. As its sponsors saw it, the idea was to try and achieve not organisational unification and not a unity of organisations, but merely joint actions, in the face of the formation of the "international of capitalist imperialism" in Genoa and the beginning onslaught of the world bourgeoisie on the positions of the proletariat.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International passed an appropriate resolution backed up by Lenin. At the Berlin Conference in April 1922, Clara Zetkin, who represented the Comintern, read out a statement proposing that a World Workers' Congress be held in the spirit of unity to consider questions like ways of rebuffing the bourgeois offensive; the struggle against reaction and militarism; assistance

in the economic rehabilitation of Soviet Russia; and the Versailles Peace. After heated debate and lengthy negotiations, which resulted in a compromise, the Berlin Conference approved a declaration saying that the question of convening a World Workers' Congress (not to be attended by the trade unions) was "in principle" agreed on. The organising committee, or the Commission of Nine, set up for the purpose, included representatives of the three Executive Committees. It was decided that joint mass demonstrations would be held during the Genoa Conference under the slogans of struggle for peace and for satisfying daily demands.

The positive results were obvious: a spontaneous bloc with the delegation of the Vienna International was formed; the attempts by the Second International representatives to isolate the Comintern delegates were frustrated; and decisions to take joint practical mass actions were adopted.

However, the right-wing Social Democrats soon began to do all they could to prevent the convocation of the World Workers' Congress and to undermine joint actions with communist parties in general. At the first sitting on May 23, 1922, of the Commission of Nine the delegate of the Second International in fact rejected not only the idea of convening the World Workers' Congress, but any joint actions with Communists, and demanded that the Comintern concede to the obviously unacceptable conditions. The delegation of the Comintern Executive had no other way than to leave the Commission of Nine.

That was the example of consistent pursuance by the Comintern of the Leninist course towards building a united workers' front on an international scale. But that time, it was the right-wing opportunist leaders again who caused the split. However, even after the reformists wrecked the conference of three Internationals, the Comintern and the communist parties continued to fight for a united workers' front.

This line was reaffirmed and developed at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern (convened on November 5, 1922), the last congress in which Lenin took part. The main achievement of that congress was that it elaborated the *tactics of a workers' government* as a political embodiment of a united workers' front in definite historical conditions, as a concrete political institution pursuing a major goal of a whole strategic phase—bringing together the majority of workers, whatever their political conviction, for the struggle against capitalism.

Lenin had formulated the slogan of a workers' government not by pure theoretical reasoning. The very logic of the united workers' front and joint actions by working-class

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "A Letter to the German Communists", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 520.

parties in accordance with the programme of struggle for partial, transitional demands were already leading some communist parties first to the idea of a political coalition, and then to the question of a coalition government, which could naturally be called a "workers' government". For instance, "socialist" Land governments of the SDPG-ISDPG,<sup>1</sup> elected in Thuringia, Saxony and Braunschweig in 1921, remained in power only thanks to the votes of the communist deputies.

Having advanced the slogan of a workers' government, the Fourth Congress stressed in its "Theses on Tactics" that "the united front tactic will be decisive for a new epoch".<sup>2</sup>

From the outset the ultra-left elements tried to present the workers' government either as a "minor episode", or as something synonymous with proletarian dictatorship. The Congress was against ignoring the independent function of a workers' government and stressed that the formation of such a transitional government would help expose false workers' governments in which leaders of right-wing social-democracy actually coalesced with bourgeois parties.

The Theses of the Fourth Congress say that Communists supported the workers' government or formed it of their own accord "jointly with the non-Communist workers' parties and organisations".<sup>3</sup> Its goal was not to directly establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, but to lead the masses to it by giving priority to the programme of transitional, partial, every-day demands as a means of bringing all contingents of the working class into a united front.

The slogan of a workers' government posed square the problem of allies of the proletariat, above all its alliance with the peasants. The Fourth Congress followed up the theses on the agrarian question issued by the Second Congress with its draft agrarian programme of action, in which it stated the demands designed to help win over the peasants onto the side of the revolutionary working-class movement.

The question of an alliance with the peasants grew increasingly urgent. The peasant movement was mounting in many countries, and various peasant parties grew active and tried to pursue an independent line between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In those conditions, already after the Fourth Congress, the Comintern greatly developed and specified the slogan of a workers' government and advanced a *worker-peasant government* formula. In a resolution adopted at the Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, held on June 12-23, 1923 in

Moscow, that formula assigned priority to national general democratic tasks aimed at the elimination of the vestiges of feudalism and effecting agrarian reforms. It was supposed that all communist parties would draw up, on the basis of that formula, their own programmes suiting national conditions.

The need to enlarge the proletariat's alliances was dictated also by the threat of fascism looming up already at that time. But not all saw the danger, the social-reformists least of all. Already the Fourth Congress defined fascism as a tool used by the big bourgeoisie for a forceful suppression of the proletarian revolutionary movement. In 1922, the Leninist Communists arrived at the important conclusion that fascism was "against the foundations of bourgeois democracy in general". This meant that the anti-fascist front should be joined also by non-proletarians. The slogan of a worker-peasant government was becoming a major element in the struggle against fascism.

So, already in 1922-1923, the Comintern, carrying out Lenin's ideas and forecasts, devised a clear-cut tactic of building a united front of all working people to defeat fascism.

In that period the main contribution of the Comintern to the development of the strategy and tactics of the international communist movement was that it further improved the tactic of a united workers' front and substantiated the slogan of a worker-peasant government and a policy of broad class and general democratic alliances.

#### 4. Major Practical Results

##### *The Struggle for Peace and Proletarian Internationalism Reaches a New Level*

The Comintern laid the foundations of the present-day struggle of Communists for peace, against armed intervention and aggression, for peaceful coexistence and disarmament. It proved that imperialism is the chief source of war danger, showing that imperialist reaction has a stake in war, and tends to suppress the revolutionary movements by force. At the same time, the Comintern named the forces capable of foiling the war plans of imperialism and so preventing a new world war. It saw in the first state of workers and peasants a decisive factor of universal peace and backed up Lenin's idea of peaceful coexistence and disarmament as an ideal of socialism.

The Comintern Platform adopted at its First Congress emphasised that only the working class could rule out war.

<sup>1</sup>The Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup>*The Communist International, 1919-1943. Documents*, Vol. 1, p. 425.

<sup>3</sup>*Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, London, 1922, p. 32.



But that was the time when world reaction had launched the unprecedented armed intervention against the first country of Soviets. Soon after that it was getting ready for another world war, relying on nascent fascism. The Comintern worked hard to prevent a new war, to help the young Soviet Republic to survive and so to increase the chances of peace. One condition of admission to the Comintern said that a party should give unreserved support to the Soviet Republic and work to persuade the workers to refuse to transport military equipment and weapons meant to be used against it, to conduct propaganda, by legal or illegal means, among the troops sent to strangle workers' republics, etc.

Of great significance is the Comintern's vast experience in organising and encouraging various forms of internationalist solidarity and mutual aid. In the historical conditions in which the Comintern emerged, all this was fairly obvious: active relations of solidarity were established, above all, with the Soviet Republic in which proletarian internationalism had become part and parcel of state policy, and with the anti-imperialist movement of the oppressed peoples.

That immediately raised proletarian internationalism onto a new level, for it extremely expanded its social base and rendered its political means more effective. This accounts for the great present-day significance of what was done by the Comintern at the time, for its experience can help parties to formulate, especially at the beginning, the diverse goals, forms and methods of not only purely workers', but general democratic solidarity in the struggle, for instance, for peace, against the export of counter-revolution, in support of Soviet republics and, last but not least, for liberation from colonial bondage.

From the outset, young Soviet Russia deemed it necessary to give whatever support it could to all revolutionaries, including material aid, even though it itself was faced with economic difficulties.

On the other hand, a broad international campaign was launched for solidarity with the starving population of the Volga Area in Russia, in response to the call issued by the Executive Committees of the Comintern and the Young Communist International on July 30, 1921.

The organisation International Workers' Aid was set up in Berlin. Among its members were Henri Barbusse, Anatole France, Bernard Shaw, and Albert Einstein. Its national committees sprang up in more than thirty countries. All in all, goods and money to the tune of over 5 million dollars were donated to the fund raised for the starving population of Russia by 1923.

Due to that aid the 1921 famine in the Volga Area was

conquered, and the positions of the enemies of Soviet Russia, who had staked on the famine, were thus sapped. That, consequently, helped to safeguard peace and promote peaceful coexistence and ensured peaceful conditions for building a new life. Addressing the Third Comintern Congress, Lenin said: "The whole international bourgeoisie is incapable of waging open war against us just now, because the whole working class, even though the majority is not yet communist, is sufficiently class-conscious to prevent intervention. The bourgeoisie is compelled to reckon with the temper of the masses."<sup>1</sup>

Besides, the International Red Aid was set up some time later, in 1922, following a decision of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern. Its purpose was to render material and juridical assistance to revolutionaries, political prisoners, peace champions, and fighters against fascism.

Thus the content of international workers' solidarity, of proletarian internationalism was expanding in the new conditions, from the "Hands Off Russia" demand to general democratic slogans, including the slogan of struggle for peace, and in this way the stage was being set for a successful struggle for socialism.

The experience gained by the Comintern in using proletarian and general democratic solidarity for preventing the international bourgeoisie from exporting counter-revolution and launching an open war against the country of the victorious proletariat was enlarged at the Seventh Comintern Congress, and today has become a global system of diverse measures and means used by the world revolutionary forces to prevent another world war.

Precisely the consistent struggle for peace carried on by the young Soviet state backed up by the international proletariat, compelled the imperialist powers to invite representatives of Soviet Russia to take part in the Genoa Conference. The Soviet delegates were sent to Genoa to achieve stable peace and a universal arms reduction. In connection with these goals of the Soviet delegates, Clara Zetkin, speaking on behalf of the First Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive, declared: "The struggle against the war danger and war itself, the struggle to which we should lead the working masses, is a substantial, important part of the struggle against capitalism and a resolute step towards the world revolution."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 495.

<sup>2</sup>Clara Zetkin, *Der Kampf der Kommunistischen Parteien gegen Kriegsfahr und Krieg*, Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale, Hamburg, 1922, p. 54.

The enthusiastic support for Soviet proposals by all communist parties, on the one hand, and the benefit of purely business relations with the state of proletarian dictatorship, on the other, compelled the imperialists to admit that peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Republic was inevitable.

That was the first sign of the triumph of the principles which underlie the present-day policies of the communist movement in the struggle for peace, and due to which the imperialists have been unable to launch a world war for over forty years now.

*The Alliance of the Workers' Movement with the Anti-Colonialist Fighters*

Yet another most important area of the Comintern's activities in its Leninist period was its work on problems related to the *anti-imperialist front and the non-capitalist path of development*.

The Comintern proved to be a powerful means of merging the efforts of the revolutionary proletariat in advanced capitalist countries with the liberation struggle waged by the colonial peoples. This union acquired an effective ideological basis and fast-developing political and organisational forms. From then on the national liberation movements could count on a more systematic and effective international solidarity of the international working class, the communist movement, and the world's first state of proletarian dictatorship.

Applying Marxism to the new conditions in a creative way, Lenin and the Third International made use of two major propositions of the founders of Marxism concerning colonial countries—the possibility in principle to by-pass the capitalist phase of development, and the need for an alliance of the oppressed nations with the country where the socialist revolution has won out and with the working-class movement in capitalist states. Lenin and the Comintern specified these general propositions in the new conditions, worked out anew a number of questions pertaining to the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggle of the oppressed nations and fused them with the national liberation movement operating in Eastern countries. The collective experience in solving these questions, especially at the Second and Fourth congresses of the Comintern, is of great interest.

The most important phase of this work was Lenin's drawing up the preliminary draft theses on the national and colonial questions so that they could be put on the agenda in a most principled way. The chief internationalist duty of Communists in the capitalist, particularly the colonial, countries, the theses said, was to give all possible assistance to the revolutionary

movements in the oppressed and dependent countries. In the most backward countries they were recommended to help also "the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement".<sup>1</sup> Entering into a temporary alliance with "bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries", the Communists, naturally, should not merge with it, but should "under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form". The theses, at the same time, stressed the "need for a determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries".<sup>2</sup>

These propositions are doubtless topical today. More often than not, the problems of attitude to the national bourgeoisie in a national democratic revolution and of relations between revolutionary democrats and Communists are a source of considerable difficulties today.

Therefore the Leninist methods of solving these problems and the experience of the Comintern are of immense significance in our day and age.

Lenin's polemics with Manabendra Nat Roy, an Indian delegate, during the discussion of the theses for the Second Congress are very instructive today. Roy objected to the thesis on aid by all communist parties to the bourgeois-democratic (national-revolutionary) liberation movement in Eastern countries. He suggested that the main thesis should declare that the destiny of world communism depended on the triumph of communism in the East. Therefore he insisted on concentrating on stirring a revolutionary movement in the colonial and dependent countries, on giving aid only to Communists in "organising the broad masses to the struggle for their class interests".<sup>3</sup>

Lenin patiently explained to Roy that his view was wrong. Finally he managed to convince him on all the main items at issue. The supplementary theses proposed by Roy, and also adopted by the Congress, no longer contained the idea of an "Asian road" of the development of the world revolution, but correctly emphasised the need to merge the efforts of both revolutionary streams, the need for Communists to cooperate with bourgeois nationalist revolutionary elements.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 149.

It should be borne in mind here, and later in the book, that the words "bourgeois-democratic" were replaced with "national-revolutionary" during the debate at the Second Congress of the Comintern.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 149, 150.

<sup>3</sup>*The International Working-Class Movement*, Vol. 4, pp. 424-25.

<sup>4</sup>*Theses and Statutes of the IIIrd Communist International Adopted by the IIIrd Congress...*, p. 72.



Such discussions in the Comintern gave Lenin the idea of a united anti-imperialist front. That idea became the central slogan of the liberation struggle in the colonial East at the Fourth Comintern Congress (1922). That slogan was yet to be specified and to acquire real content, first during the Seventh Comintern Congress in the conditions of struggle against fascism and war, and then in the 1950s and 1960s, so as to develop into the effective anti-imperialist alliance involving the patriotic bourgeoisie for attaining the goals of the national liberation phase and opening up prospects for national-democratic development.

As the definition of the motive forces of an anti-imperialist, national liberation revolution was thus specified, the next step was to specify the way of colonial countries to socialism and the possible transition stages on that way.

Marx and Engels, when speaking of the possibility in principle for backward nations to by-pass, or shorten, or interrupt capitalist development (using certain anti-capitalist potential of the patriarchal peasantry and its collectivist tendencies, and relying on the aid of the victorious socialist revolution), could not go farther, of course, than a hypothesis. They did not think it possible, at that time, to predict any stages or length of corresponding processes, preferring to learn from history and not to impose *a priori* models. They wrote that it was not known what stages of development backward nations would go through until they reached socialism.

Lenin approached these ideas of the classics of Marxism with tact and care and applied them creatively to the new conditions. At the Second Comintern Congress the first steps were made on Lenin's initiative to substantiate theoretically the proposition that "with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage".<sup>1</sup>

The example of the Central Asian peoples that were decolonised as a result of the October Revolution with the direct support and disinterested aid of Russia's proletariat, and to a large extent the example of Mongolia gave Lenin enough grounds to forecast with certainty, at least in one definite case, the stage of the struggle and its form: "Victorious national uprisings in these countries may open the way for their direct development towards Socialism and their avoiding the stage of capitalism, provided real, powerful assistance

is rendered to them by the countries in which the proletarian dictatorship is established."<sup>1</sup>

In other cases special approaches and intermediate stages had to be determined, considering that in colonies the peasants made up the bulk of the population. But here, too, Lenin set the task of properly applying "the general theory and practice of communism".<sup>2</sup> In other words, he demanded that the necessary stages must not be jumped over, and that one should not rely on the vanguard alone, but work to win real support among the masses, unswervingly encouraging revolutionary activity, independent and organised action of the toiling masses, "regardless of the level they have reached."<sup>3</sup>

Lenin could predict already then a concrete form of power during the transition stage—the Soviets which "will not be workers' Soviets, but peasants' Soviets, or Soviets of working people."<sup>4</sup>

But he did not in the least insist on the immediate formation of communist parties in the countries where the proletariat had not yet taken shape. Instructive in this sense is a piece of advice given by Lenin to those in the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party who were going to rename their party Communist in 1921: "The revolutionaries will have to put in a good deal of work in developing state, economic and cultural activities before the herdsman elements become a proletarian mass, which may eventually help to 'transform' the People's Revolutionary Party into a Communist Party. A mere change of signboards is harmful and dangerous."<sup>5</sup>

The subsequent developments bore out the conclusion made by Lenin and the Comintern that separate actions by the oppressed nations would inevitably become part of one national liberation and revolutionary stream, directed in the long run against imperialism; and that for this reason national liberation movements would have an ever greater role to play in the revolutionary process. All this has come true in our time, when the colonial system has fallen to pieces and the role played by the newly-free countries in world politics has greatly increased and keeps growing.

Yet another conclusion which is of significance today is that

<sup>1</sup>Programme of the Communist International, Workers Library Publishers, New York, 1929, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, November 22, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>4</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 232-33.

<sup>5</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Talk With a Delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, 1971, p. 361.

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 244.

in the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism the *social* content of the national liberation movements and revolutions will be growing ever deeper. Today we see that this process has already resulted in the emergence of more than a dozen socialist-oriented countries, and has strengthened the militant alliance of Communists and revolutionary democrats, the latter gravitating towards Marxism-Leninism, to principles of scientific socialism.

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Such were the first practical results of the fusion of revolutionary Marxism, enriched in the new epoch by Lenin's creative elaboration of strategy and tactics, with the working-class, general democratic and national liberation movements in the initial period of the Comintern's activities. The fusion did not come about automatically, and it is not a fleeting phenomenon. It was a complex creative process developing by stages and effected through the collective thinking and efforts of all parties, of the entire movement. However, the most difficult initial period when the theoretical foundations of new strategy and tactics were being laid, is associated above all with the name of great Lenin, with his truly gigantic preparatory work to scientifically substantiate the need for setting up a new, revolutionary International, with his profound analytical activity during the October Revolution and the first abortive revolutions in the new epoch in the West.

The role played by Lenin in that preparatory period was so enormous that it is quite easy for bourgeois and social-reformist propaganda to distort the actual state of affairs by alleging that the October Revolution, the Comintern and the new strategy and tactics were the product of Lenin's subjective will and the result of the Bolsheviks' narrow, egoistic political interests. Lenin's role and his personal contribution in that process were great, indeed. But Lenin was neither a subjectivist, nor a voluntarist or an adventurer, as is alleged by his political adversaries. All his thinking and scientific analysis were most closely linked with revolutionary practice, with the sentiments and actions of the popular masses. As he developed new strategic and tactical principles in the new historical epoch and sought effectively to combine revolutionary Marxism, which he had enriched, with the real working-class and liberation movement, Lenin proceeded not only from his own theoretical conclusions, but also from the practical experience of the class struggle during World War I, the October Revolution and the post-October revolutionary developments. At a time, when the situation

and the alignment of class forces were changing, Lenin did not rely solely on his great intuition of a revolutionary. He checked his conclusions, referring to the lessons of history, the collective thought of the parties, and the experience of the masses. But the main thing is that the setting up of the Comintern met the vital national interests of the working people in all countries.

In the Comintern's first years, Lenin displayed his genius, in particular, at the turn of 1921 when he clearly saw that it was necessary to give up the idea of taking power by storm in favour of a siege tactic and to replace one tactical and strategic formula by another. At that time he demonstrated an exemplary style of leadership which involved democratic discussing of hard problems and decision-making. He displayed, on the one hand, inflexible loyalty to principles and, on the other, capability for tactical flexibility in changing conditions, relying at that time not on armed struggle as before, but on winning partial goals gradually, stage by stage, using the assistance of temporary allies and never losing sight of the ultimate goal. He thus demonstrated the immutability of the chief principle of revolutionary Marxism, which says that a socialist revolution is the product of creative activities of the popular masses themselves. It is most certain that without Lenin it would have taken the Comintern much more time to find correct solutions, and this could play into the hands of its class enemies. Such a threat confronted it to a small extent in the first years after Lenin's death. To a small extent because Lenin had left after himself the main thing: the specified principles and the revolutionary methods of practically applying them in the changed conditions of the new epoch.

The practical results achieved by the Comintern during Lenin's lifetime were only the beginning. They were the fruit of the first efforts to fuse Marxism-Leninism with the working-class, democratic and national liberation movements. And the struggles which began at that time and passed through the crucible of the class battles in the 1930s and 1940s, have now taken the shape of powerful liberation movements and processes, and have brought about a cardinal change in the alignment of class forces in the world, leading to the emergence of a new type of statehood and civilisation. All this has come true because the goal of the Comintern and Lenin—to build a powerful working-class movement as a vigorous nucleus of class struggle—was timely attained.

Today, each communist party has become a national force and no longer needs tutelage from a single international headquarters. To have a single organisation of communist



parties would be inexpedient now that mature and experienced parties exist; for this would only reduce the effectiveness of the work of the fraternal parties in their own countries. But today, too, there still is a need for effective and vigorous international solidarity of Communists in the fight against the common adversary.

## *Chapter Seven*

### *The Communist International in the Years of Stability and the Years of Crisis. Communists Vs. Fascism and War*

In the mid-1920s the situation in the world began to change. Socialism in Russia gained ground and grew stronger. The Soviet Republic had repulsed the attacks of domestic and foreign counter-revolution and was now building a new society. At that time production was going up in the capitalist world. The revolutionary wave, set off by October 1917, was subsiding, and the revolutionary process as a whole slowed down.

All this compelled the working-class movement and the communist parties to change their policies in keeping with the new conditions. The tactics of direct onslaught on capitalism were suspended. Thorough preparations of the parties and the working class for new battles lay ahead. Revolutionary work had to be conducted by new methods, considering the changed conditions of life and public sentiments. And the Third International oriented the communist parties just on that.

#### *The Communist Movement in the Conditions of a Temporary and Partial Stabilisation of Capitalism*

The Fifth Congress of the Comintern (June-July 1924) considered the question of the tactics of communist parties in the situation when socialist society was being built successfully in the USSR and there was a partial stabilisation of capitalism in the West. The Congress set the task of mastering the ideological, organisational and tactical principles of Bolshevism by communist parties. The slogan of Bolshevisation was later interpreted by bourgeois ideologists and right-wing opportunist elements on many occasions as subjugation of communist parties by Moscow, alleging that an abstract scheme of activities was being imposed on them, again by Moscow. In reality, however, the goal was altogether different: to make the communist parties militant class organisations operating on the principles worked out by Marx and Engels and developed in every way by Lenin.

In the documents adopted by the Fifth Congress the notion of Bolshevisation was clearly defined. It meant, the documents said, restructuring local organisations of a party, which

were to be set up at places of work; promotion of criticism and self-criticism and correction of right-wing and "left-wing" mistakes; and building a reliable system of party education and the ideological training of the party cadres.

This explains why bourgeois and opportunist ideologists were dissatisfied to know that the Bolshevisation slogan meant in fact the strengthening of the communist parties as true revolutionary organisations of the working class.

The Congress paid due attention also to the strategy and tactics of the struggle in the new conditions. It confirmed that the tactics of a united workers' front elaborated by Lenin and the slogan of struggle for the formation of a worker-peasant government were to be used in the new situation as well. But, regrettably, at that time there prevailed an incorrect understanding of the united front policy, which was wrongly interpreted not as a platform for struggle, but as a slogan of agitation, a method of mobilising the masses. And the idea of the struggle for the formation of a worker-peasant government was viewed not as a temporary slogan for a transition period, but as a "nickname of the dictatorship of the proletariat". That sectarian approach prevented the communist parties from growing into mass organisations and left the leadership of the struggle for the daily needs of the working people to social-democratic parties and to other reformist organisations. It hampered the understanding by the popular masses of the interrelationship between immediate demands and the struggle to attain the ultimate goal. In other words, the ultra-left approach objectively played into the hands of the right-wing leaders of social democracy, helping them to retain control of the trade unions and other mass organisations of working people and impeded the efforts to achieve joint actions by them.

The departure from the Leninist understanding of the united front policy occurred largely because after Lenin's death Trotskyite and other ultra-left and right-wing opportunist groupings in the Comintern grew more active. The Seventh Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive Committee (November-December 1926) denounced Trotskyism and similar opposition groups, for they did not believe that socialism could be ever built in the USSR, broke with Leninism completely and employed splitting tactics. The Ninth Plenary Meeting of the Executive Committee (February 1928) acknowledged that the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) had been right when it expelled the Trotskyites from the party and passed a decision that Trotskyite opposition was incompatible with membership in the Communist International.

The Sixth Congress of the Comintern, held in August 1928, continued the analysis of the world situation, which was now marked by successes of the USSR in building socialism, on the one hand, and the deepening crisis in the capitalist world, on the other. The monopoly bourgeoisie feared the upsurge of the working-class movement in the capitalist countries and the national liberation struggle in the colonial, semicolonial and dependent countries. The Congress spoke of the danger of the military ventures imperialism was preparing, and called for peace efforts, for action to defend the Soviet Union and support the peoples of the colonies and dependent countries fighting against the imperialist interventionists.

The Congress adopted the Programme and Statute of the Communist International, thus enhancing the ideological and political level of the communist parties and making them stronger organisationally. However, the Programme was rather sketchy and influenced by sectarianism, since the strategic guidelines of the communist parties were based not on the analysis of the situation at the time, but on the overall social and economic characteristic of a given type of countries.

Lenin criticised such theoretical errors made in the past by Georgy Plekhanov, one of the founders of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. He wrote: "First, he confused the 'general character' of the revolution, *its social and economic content*, with the question of the motive forces of the revolution. Marxists must not confuse these questions; they must not even *directly* deduce the answer to the second question from the answer to the first without a special concrete analysis."<sup>1</sup> This Marxist-Leninist dictum was ignored in the Programme, and it offered a pattern of the alignment of the main class forces in each group of countries which was not based on the analysis of the real balance of forces in individual countries. Meanwhile, though the socio-economic content of revolution in the countries within one and the same group was relatively similar, the alignment of class forces differed a great deal from country to country, and was changing as a country passed from one phase of the revolutionary process to another.

So the Programme oriented the communist parties in advanced capitalist countries on a struggle directly for socialism, ignoring the general democratic slogans, though the actual situation demanded that the communist parties elaborate and put forth precisely such slogans in order to win

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "The Aim of the Proletarian Struggle in Our Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 375.



over the broad masses of working people. The slogan of a worker-peasant government as a transitional slogan was presented in the Programme as applicable only in agrarian countries and colonies.

The Congress paid much attention to problems of the national liberation movement. It must be noted here that the partial stabilisation of capitalism at the time meant intensified exploitation of colonies and semicolonies by imperialism. That inevitably stimulated a fresh upswing in the national liberation movement.

The effective solution of the national question in the USSR greatly invigorated the struggle of the oppressed nations for their rights, against imperialism.

The early 1920s saw an upsurge in the movement of solidarity with the struggle carried on by the peoples in the colonial countries. Thus, the Communists backed up the Moroccan people who fought heroically against the French and Spanish colonialists in 1921-1926. The Soviet Union and the entire communist movement supported the courageous struggle of the Afghan people for independence, against British colonialists. When the people of Nicaragua led by Augusto Cesar Sandino rose in arms against the North American invaders, the Soviet Union and the communist parties the world over and the World Anti-Imperialist League supported the just cause of the people of Nicaragua. The Sixth Comintern Congress adopted a special resolution calling for world-wide support to Sandino and his intrepid struggle against the US aggressors. The Comintern backed up the Indonesian patriots who, led by Communists, launched an armed struggle against the Dutch colonialists on Java in 1926 and on Sumatra in 1927. The international communist movement expressed solidarity with the Vietnamese Communists and other patriots who rose in 1930 to free their country from the French colonialists.

The international communist movement unfailingly backed up the struggle waged by the peoples of India and South Africa against the British colonialists. The Chinese revolution enjoyed vigorous support from the Soviet people and Communists the world over.

The Sixth Congress of the Comintern issued a thesis on a united anti-imperialist front (the idea of such a front had been substantiated in detail by Lenin at the Second Comintern Congress). The Sixth Congress warned the Communists in the colonial and semicolonial countries against the danger of skipping the national liberation phase, urging them to take due account of the degree of the movement's maturity and its specifics in each country. In the Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-

Colonies,<sup>1</sup> the Congress pointed out that it was erroneous to regard the entire national bourgeoisie in the colonies as anti-national. It noted, though not clearly enough, its anti-imperialist potential, and said that national revolutionary petty-bourgeois parties were allies of the proletariat. At the same time, it set the task of forming truly proletarian parties in the colonial world. Cooperation between the Soviet Union, the working-class movement in the capitalist countries and the national liberation movement was decisive, the Theses said.

They summed up the experience in the national liberation struggle gained after the Second Congress, but were not free from sectarian ideas. Both the Programme and Theses extended to colonies and semicolonies the experience of a bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into a socialist one, which was typical of countries with a medium level of capitalist development. That led to underestimation of the specifics of the national liberation revolution as a special type of revolution, which was characteristic of colonies and semicolonies and was associated with the need to fight for political independence as a top-priority goal. The shifting of emphasis, from the national to the social aspect artificially narrowed down the front of the forces that had come out against foreign imperialism and its feudal and comprador allies.

This approach, in which national specifics were ignored and the tasks of a revolution were deduced not from a concrete alignment of forces in a given country but directly from the maturity level of the basis, induced Communists to adopt sectarian attitudes in tactics and to misjudge the national bourgeoisie as a counter-revolutionary force. Therefore, instead of concentrating the main blow on imperialism, the Programme directed the parties against "national-reformism", that is, against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces which had not yet exhausted their anti-imperialist potential. That obstructed the setting up of a broad anti-imperialist front and the efforts to enhance the role of the proletariat and its parties in it.

Objectively, that sectarian approach to the proletariat's hegemony in the anti-imperialist movement played into the hands of the national reformists, for it prevented the peasant masses from uniting around the working class and helped the bourgeois elements to split the national liberation movement and isolate the Communists. The negative effect of that approach was most obvious in China in the period between the defeat of the 1925-1927 revolution and the mid-1930s,

<sup>1</sup>*The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies*, Modern Books Limited, London, 1929.

when the Chinese Communists, assisted by the Comintern, employed the tactics of a united anti-Japanese front.

The Sixth Congress adopted a political platform calling upon the popular masses to join actively in the struggle against the war menace. The Congress noted that the Land of Soviets was the main target of the hostile policy pursued by all imperialist powers and warned about a possible clash between two groups of imperialist states in the struggle for world hegemony. As we all know, that forecast proved correct. One of the groups was headed by Hitler Germany and the other by the imperialists of Britain, France and the United States.

The Comintern proposed a series of measures to safeguard peace. The struggle against the war danger was associated at the time with the struggle for overthrowing the capitalist system. This slogan caused great harm because it totally ignored the real conditions of struggle and the extent of objective and subjective preparedness of the masses for a revolution. The slogan was unable to bring nearer revolutionary change, but only hampered the struggle for peace and a broad anti-war front.

#### *The Comintern Devises Anti-Fascist Strategy*

The Sixth Congress did much to explain the relationship between the anti-war struggle and the struggle against fascism. The Communist International began to elaborate its anti-fascist policy right after the fascists came to power in a number of European countries. The danger of fascism and the need to take it into account when drawing up a political line was pointed out by Lenin after the fascist coup in Italy, in his speech at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern. The Third Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the ECCI (June 1923) was addressed by Clara Zetkin who spoke of the struggle against fascism. Already then the plenary meeting insisted on combined actions by all anti-fascist forces in every area of activity in a given country. It warned the Communists against regarding any reactionary regime as fascist. The plenary meeting stressed that the fascists were recruiting most of their supporters from among the middle sections of the population whose living standard had dropped, as well as the unemployed and declassé elements. It criticised the dogmatic and sectarian stand of the Bordiga group, which was at the helm in the Italian Communist Party and regarded not the fascists but the Socialist Party as enemy number one.

The Sixth Congress denounced the oversimplified view of fascism according to which it was regarded as a historically inevitable stage in the development of capitalism and as a

political superstructure corresponding to the stage of monopoly capitalism. That approach implied that the fascist regime was a product of the economic basis, ignored the historical, social and political sources of fascism and so impeded the efforts to mobilise the popular masses against the fascist danger and fascist dictatorship.

The mounting fascist menace, the Congress said, had been caused by the desire of the more reactionary part of the monopoly bourgeoisie to damp down the class struggle and win mass support among the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie. The delegates exposed the class nature of fascism as a "terrorist dictatorship of big capital" which resorted to terror and social demagoguery in domestic policy, its foreign policy being marked by extreme imperialist aggressiveness.

The Congress countered the onslaught of fascism with a policy of united front. Unfortunately, the sectarian departure from the Leninist understanding of this policy led in practice to its gradual replacement with the ultra-left "class against class" tactics. The original goal of these tactics was to win the workers over from the social-democratic parties, to make them give up class collaboration with the bourgeoisie and confront the united front of the bourgeoisie with working-class unity. It was wrongly supposed that all social-democracy had gone over entirely to reactionary positions (hence its characteristic as "social-fascism"). The advocates of these sectarian views confused the chief enemy, against whom the main blow had to be delivered, with the biggest danger in the working-class movement, and recommended that the main blow be levelled at the intermediate forces and saw the greatest danger in left-wing Social Democrats. In this way they helped the right-wing social-democratic leaders, whether they wanted it or not, to sabotage united action against fascism, to poison the masses of social-democratic workers with anti-communism, and to split the proletariat. Political reaction did not fail to avail itself of that chance.

The 11th Plenary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (March-April 1931) set before the Communists the task of fighting, by all means available, not only against fascist dictatorships, but also against the spreading of fascist influence on political activities, and against the fascist onslaught itself. True, the plenary meeting overestimated the extent and the rate of maturing of the revolutionary crisis and underestimated the complex alignment of political forces in the world arena.

It under-rated also the contradiction between bourgeois democracy and fascism. Thus the plenary meeting further promoted the negative sectarian assessment of the political role of social-democracy, which was at the time labelled "so-



cial-fascism". That erroneous assessment was based on the fact that right-wing social-democratic leaders were involved in the terrorist acts against advanced workers, and failed to take into account the mounting anti-fascist sentiments within social-democracy and the masses following it.

However, the subsequent developments made some sections of the Comintern and its leading bodies realise that in a situation when fascism was gaining ground and the threat of war was growing, the ultra-left sectarian sentiments were the greatest danger to the working-class and national liberation movements. In the early 1930s, the sectarian groupings, which called for direct "introduction of socialism", were defeated ideologically and organisationally in the communist parties of France, Germany, Spain, China, Chile and some other countries. The 12th Plenary Meeting of the ECCI (August-September 1932) made further steps to remove the obstacles in the way to a united anti-fascist front.

The Plenary meeting stressed that, while working to build a united front, one must not demand that Social Democrats and reformist trade unions recognise, as a preliminary condition, the leading role of a communist party. It pointed out that partial demands should be fought for. The plenary meeting helped nonetheless to mobilise the masses against fascism and war, although it failed to revise the erroneous assessments of the degree of maturity of the revolutionary situation and the role of social-democracy.

After the Nazis seized power in Germany in January 1933, the communist parties in France, Germany and Poland issued a joint statement proposing to the social-democratic workers to forge a united front of proletarian struggle. When the Labour and Socialist International<sup>1</sup> announced, at last, that it was prepared to negotiate joint anti-fascist actions with the Comintern, the latter proposed in March 1933 a concrete platform of joint actions by workers' parties. Part of the Social Democrats were persuaded to take part, together with Communists and other democrats, in the European Anti-Fascist Congress, held in June 1933 in Paris. But the leadership of the Labour and Socialist International and of its constituent parties refused to conclude an agreement on joint actions with the leaderships of the communist parties.

The 13th Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive, held in December 1933, defined fascism as "the open, terror-

ist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital",<sup>1</sup> as the enemy of all democratic-minded people. However, it failed to overcome the sectarian view of social-democracy as the main social buttress of the bourgeoisie, and this impeded the building of a united anti-fascist front.

#### *The Lessons of the Nazi Takeover in Germany in 1933*

The Soviet people led by the Leninist Party built a socialist society in the USSR in the mid-1930s and did away with the exploiter classes. The Soviet Union became economically independent and developed an appropriate defence potential. The Soviet achievements in building socialism stimulated an upsurge in the national liberation movements in China, India, Morocco and other countries.

Meanwhile, in the capitalist countries the more reactionary circles of finance capital sought a way out of the economic crisis that hit the capitalist world in 1929-1933 by getting ready for a new world war. So they staked on fascism and militarism.

Germany, the most powerful country in Europe, was hit the hardest by the economic crisis. By that time it had not recovered fully from the aftermath of the defeat and exhaustion of World War I. As a result, the class struggle of the proletariat was mounting, and the Communist Party, which proposed a revolutionary way out of the crisis, was gaining increasing prestige among the people.

The biggest German and international monopolies set out to dismantle bourgeois democratic institutions and replace them with terrorist dictatorship. In January 1933, the financial tycoons and leaders of the main bourgeois political parties and the military agreed on giving all power to the Nazi leader—Adolf Hitler. The leadership of the Social-Democratic Party rejected the Communist Party's proposal on calling jointly a general political strike to prevent the seizure of power by the Nazis. On January 30, 1933, Hitler came to power, and in June he banned all the political parties in the country except the Nazis and declared the "unified" trade unions to be part of the Nazi party. A reign of terror was established in the country, militarisation was in full swing, and the war machine worked at capacity.

The Communist Party of Germany had to go underground and, though its organisational system was smashed and its leaders, including its chairman Ernst Thaelmann, arrested,

<sup>1</sup> *The Labour and Socialist International* (1923-1939) was an international association of social-democratic parties. In 1933 it prohibited its sections to conclude agreements with communist parties on joint actions against fascism and war, but later, yielding to popular pressure, it was compelled to allow them to decide that question independently, though refusing to accept the Comintern's proposals on combined anti-fascist actions.

<sup>1</sup> *Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. Theses and Decisions*, Modern Books LTD, London, 1934, p. 6.

it carried on a vigorous struggle against the Nazis.

But a considerable part of the working people, misled by the revenge-seeking propaganda and social demagoguery of the Nazis, assumed a wait-and-see attitude. Others deluded themselves into thinking that Hitler's rule would not last long. Only a part of the German people, with the Communists at the head, adhered to the anti-fascist democratic stand and launched an underground movement of resistance to Nazism. Though the social-democratic and liberal quarters were also subjected to repression, they failed to organise themselves for a struggle against Nazism.

Nazism came to power largely because the working class was split due to the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie pursued by the right-wing social-democratic leaders, and was disarmed politically and organisationally. The Communist Party of Germany was not strong enough to mobilise the masses against Nazism without the help of the Social Democrats. So the right-wing social-democratic leaders were responsible before the world for being inactive at the crucial moment when the Nazis were on their way to power.

The proletariat failed to establish contacts with its natural allies in the joint anti-fascist struggle. The Nazis took over the leadership of fairly large sections of the petty bourgeoisie in town and country.

The Communists, though they acted as most consistent fighters against Nazism, did not avoid sectarian mistakes, which obstructed the building of a united anti-fascist front.

The Nazi takeover in a major country of Central Europe presented a mortal threat to the gains of the working class and entire civilisation and pushed the world to the brink of an imperialist war.

*Armed Resistance of the Masses to Nazism in Austria  
(February 1934)*

As the most severe crisis hit Austria, and after the Hitlerites came to power in Germany, the Austrian bourgeoisie came out to abolish bourgeois-democratic freedoms and establish a clerical-cum-Nazi dictatorship. The ruling Christian Social Party dissolved the parliament, abolished local self-government, outlawed the Communist Party, and proclaimed Austria a "social-Christian German state on a corporative basis" (September 1933). A campaign of terror against workers' organisations set in. It was then that the Communist Party called for setting up anti-fascist committees and proposed that joint action against the Nazi reactionaries be launched together with the Social-Democratic Party.

The Social-Democratic Party was, on the whole, opposed

to Nazism and exercised leadership of the armed groups of *Schutzbund* (workers' militia). Nonetheless, it was inconsistent and vacillated when it came to rebuffing Nazism. When early in February 1934 the government removed the social-democratic burgomaster of Vienna, arrested *Schutzbund* commanders and, in fact, annulled the constitution, the Communist Party of Austria called for a general strike. The social-democratic leadership did not support that call, though a decision taken at the Party congress in October 1933 made it binding on them to use this form of struggle in such an event. But when the police in Linz attacked the headquarters of the Social-Democratic Party on February 12, 1934, the local *Schutzbund* detachments offered an armed resistance. A series of spontaneous armed actions took place in various cities. At last the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party decided by a one-vote majority for a general strike, but did nothing to organise it or to start armed struggle. The strike failed. The Communists fought on the barricades together with *Schutzbundists*, but the enemy forces were superior. The rising was suppressed by troops: 1,200 workers were killed, 5,000 wounded and 10,000 arrested. Nine *Schutzbund* commanders and many of the arrested were executed following a death sentence passed by the court martial. All workers' organisations were banned.

The insurgents were defeated because their actions were spontaneous and never reached the level of an armed rising. The anti-fascist armed struggle was not organised. The insurgents had adopted defensive tactics. They did not have one centre, lacked due understanding among themselves, and had no programme. The social-democratic leadership, which remained passive, was mainly to blame for the defeat.

After that defeat of the working class, the left wing of social-democracy, the "revolutionary socialists" above all, grew more critical of the party's line and the theory of so-called Austrian Marxism. The experience of the battles fought jointly with the Communists made it possible to begin overcoming anti-communism and launching joint anti-fascist actions. Many of those who fought in the February battles joined the Communist Party. Building a "united front from below", the Communists at the same time sought agreements on joint actions against Nazism.

But the crucial moment had passed. In the long run, the defeat of the Austrian working class in February 1934 opened the way to the Anschluss (forced joining) of Austria to Nazi Germany and a temporary loss of its national sovereignty in 1938, when the country was occupied by Nazi troops.



After Germany, fascists took power in a number of European countries (in the Baltic countries, Romania, Austria, and Greece) and, finally, a fascist mutiny took place in Spain in 1936. The fascist states, primarily Germany and Italy, set to recarving the world map. Italy occupied Albania (1939) and Ethiopia (1935-1941), invaded Greece (1940) and Yugoslavia (1941), and made territorial claims to France. Germany seized Poland's border lands, moved its troops into the demilitarised Rhine area (1936) and was getting ready for the seizure of Austria (1938) and Czechoslovakia (1938-1939). Germany and Italy assisted the mutiny led by Franco against the Spanish Republic and sent their troops to Spain in 1936. Germany signed a military-political treaty with Japan in 1936 on dividing the "spheres of influence" between them—the Anti-Comintern Pact—which was joined by Italy in 1937. Japan occupied Manchuria in 1931-1932, installed a puppet regime there. Then it undertook acts of aggression against the USSR (1938) and against the Mongolian People's Republic (1939). It invaded central China in 1937. The near-sighted policy of Britain, France and the US that dreamed of "canalising" fascist aggression against the USSR, bleeding Germany and Japan white, restoring capitalism in the USSR and thus establishing their world domination, helped fascism to involve ever more countries in the crucible of World War II. That "nearsightedness" had its deep class roots.

The spectacular achievements of the Soviet Union in building the foundation of socialism, solving the national question, promoting friendship and equality among its peoples and attaining economic independence had a profound revolutionising impact on the working people in the capitalist countries and on the oppressed peoples of the East.

The economic crisis spelled the end to the policy of broad social manoeuvring and reforms pursued by the monopoly bourgeoisie in the 1920s with the help of right-wing social-democratic leaders.

The progressive forces, including the communist parties, failed to see at once the true proportions of the fascist menace. Therefore the long struggle by the Communists for peace and against the war danger, on the one hand, and the actions by the anti-fascist movement launched at their initiative, on the other, went parallel, on different planes. The "class against class" tactics, for their part, led to a heavy defeat in the clash with fascism which countered these tactics with the false "socialism or fascism" alternative. As the fascist threat was mounting and the preparations for a new world

war were going ahead, the "class against class" tactics caused the self-isolation of the organised and politically conscious proletariat from the other democratic forces and pushed the vacillating masses into the camp of fascism and war. These tactics took no account of the fact that the petty bourgeoisie, driven mad by the horrors of the crisis, and the sections of the workers close to them, especially the unemployed, became susceptible to chauvinism and were prepared to rush into the crucible of militarism and war, seeing in it the easiest way of solving their immediate problems.

The biggest obstacle in the way to a coordinated anti-fascist struggle was savage anti-Sovietism, which had infected the leaders of social-democracy and induced them to regard fascism as a "lesser evil" and even as an effective means of struggle against Communists. The false idea of fascism being a revolutionary trend of the petty bourgeoisie and even a revolutionary agrarian movement gained currency in the left wing of social-democracy. Some of the left-wing Social Democrats were confused by the social demagoguery of the fascists and failed to distinguish between their mass base and their class essence, between their radical phraseology and the counter-revolutionary character of their actions.

They had to go through many years of bitter defeats, which took the toll of millions of human lives, before they saw the correctness of the communist definition of fascism as a counter-revolutionary force of the more rabid reactionary and chauvinist part of monopoly capital.

As the preparations for the Seventh Congress of the Communist International were in progress, a wide discussion began in its leadership and in the parties to sum up the available experience of anti-fascist actions. Already at the first sitting of the preparatory commission (June 1934) the delegates of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) in the Comintern stressed the need for substantially changing the tactics employed by the communist parties and the international revolutionary movement as a whole. In a letter dated July 1, 1934, and addressed to the Executive Committee of the Communist International and to the Central Committee of the CPSU (B), Georgy Dimitrov, who had just been rescued from Nazi butchers, proposed that the erroneous view of social-democracy as social-fascism be revised, that the unification of revolutionary and reformist trade unions be promoted, and that the united front tactics be used in launching a mass struggle against fascism.

In mid-1934, many communist parties came to realise the need for directing the main blow against fascism and for involving not only workers, including Social Democrats, but

also peasants and the urban middle strata in vigorous anti-fascist actions. The turning point came with the agreement on a united front concluded between the Communist and Socialist parties in France, and also in Italy. Negotiations between Communists and Socialists began in Spain and Chile.

In late 1934 and early 1935, the ECCI summed up the results of discussions and formulated in general terms the conclusion that top priority should be given to anti-fascist and anti-war tasks, which in a number of countries opened a general democratic phase of the struggle on the way to the next stage—the socialist revolution.

These new strategic guidelines were specified at the Seventh Comintern Congress (July-August 1935), which was attended by delegates from 76 communist parties.

The Congress stressed in its resolutions the decisive significance of the triumph of socialism in the USSR for world development, for the victory of the proletariat and all working people, for the entire democratic movement for peace and against fascist warmongers.

In the first place, the Congress pointed out the most dangerous development in the world at the time—the ongoing preparations for an imperialist world war, for a counter-revolutionary war against the USSR. The war preparations had been started by the aggressive imperialist forces headed by the fascist powers, above all Hitler Germany and imperialist Japan.

The Congress stressed that the slogan of safeguarding peace was vitally important. The Congress showed that the general democratic struggle for peace was objectively consonant with the class goals of the revolutionary proletariat. This gave the lie to the assertions of “left” opportunists, who underestimated peace efforts and regarded war as the chief means of clearing the way to a socialist revolution. The Congress indicated the target of the main blow—German Nazism, the chief instigator of a world war threatening peace, the security of nations and the independent existence of many states. The fascist powers were growing more aggressive, which opened up opportunities for cooperation between the USSR and those capitalist countries which at the time wanted to maintain peace and were alarmed to see the world map being recarved by the fascist aggressors. The Congress explained the need for unity among all forces that wanted peace, including the states whose existence was jeopardised by the fascist aggressor.

*The Class Essence and the Mass Base of Fascism.  
Its Internal Contradictions*

Proceeding from Lenin's thesis on two methods of class rule by the bourgeoisie, the Congress drew a clear distinction between fascism and bourgeois democracy as different forms of a bourgeois state. That made it possible to see the role fascism played in the socio-economic and political evolution of imperialism and, first, to disprove the view that bourgeois democracy would inevitably turn into fascism and, second, to ascertain that it was erroneous to identify any reactionary political regime with fascism. The Congress reaffirmed the definition of a fascist regime as an open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital. The actual interests of the petty bourgeoisie and the declassé elements used by fascism as its mass base were irreconcilable with the interests of the financial oligarchy, the Congress stressed. That enabled it to determine the main contradiction in the system of fascism—the contradiction between its class nature and its mass base. In this way the vulnerable spot of that extremely cruel and inflexible regime was detected. Hence the salient points of anti-fascist strategy.

The Congress gave a concise analysis of the ideology and social psychology of fascism, stressing its typical features—ideological eclecticism, social demagoguery, the cult of violence, militarism, bellicose nationalism, chauvinism, racism, speculation on national traditions, and flirtation with the youth and the unemployed. Fascism cultivates criminal forms of social conduct, passing them off as partisan and state valour, and practises criminal methods in domestic and foreign policies. The foreign policy pursued by the fascist states was marked by extreme treachery and cynical disregard for international law.

The fascist states openly proclaimed enslavement and extermination of whole nations and even races the goal of their foreign policy, with aggression and imperialist war being its chief method. Therefore the peace struggle had to be closely interrelated with the struggle against the fascist menace.

The Seventh Congress brought out not only the essential “birthmarks” of fascism, but also its specific varieties caused by the place occupied by a country in the world capitalist system (imperialist, small capitalist or dependent states), the difference in the social make-up of countries (industrialised capitalist, agrarian petty-bourgeois or altogether backward), specifics in the evolution of the ideology and social mentality of the population (a victorious or a vanquished country), and so on. These specifics, for their part,



produced a peculiar pattern of the fascist movement, the structure of fascist power, and methods of government. Thus, in some cases, even in one and the same country, fascism donned now right-wing radical, now monarchic, now republican robes, and sometimes it took the shape of military dictatorship or a corporate state.

The Seventh Congress reaffirmed the need for reckoning with the fact that fascism had many faces and was easily adaptable, that it could change its slogans and forms of struggle swiftly, disguise itself under quite different, seemingly attractive, and sometimes even "revolutionary" masks, and thoroughly to conceal its true criminal, reactionary and inhuman face. All this should be necessarily considered, the Congress said, when the tactics of anti-fascist struggle were devised.

The Congress warned against the illusions widespread in some parties that fascist dictatorships were bound to collapse by themselves. The only way to the overthrow of fascist regimes, to prevent the fascists' coming to power in other countries and to avert a new imperialist war being prepared by the fascist aggressors, the Congress said, was to unite all the anti-fascist, anti-war and democratic forces, all those who joined the broad popular front to oppose fascist aggression.

#### *The United Anti-Fascist Front of the Working Class*

A united workers' front was to be the central element of resistance to fascism. "The defense of the immediate economic and political interests of the working class, the defense of the working class against fascism, must form the *starting point* and *main content* of the united front in all capitalist countries."<sup>1</sup>

Combined actions meant joint efforts against the onslaught of fascism, efforts to shift the consequences of the crisis onto the shoulders of the rich and preserve bourgeois-democratic freedoms, defend the rights and gains of the working people and obstruct the preparations for the imperialist war. The Communists were to teach the working people to rapidly change forms and methods of struggle so as to suit the changing situation.

The united front tactics were visualised differently in different countries, depending on the state and character of workers' organisations, their political level, and the situation in a given country and the world in general.

Among these forms of joint action Georgy Dimitrov mentioned the following in his report: coordinated joint actions of the workers to be agreed upon from case to case on definite occasions, on individual demands or on the basis of a common platform; coordinated actions in individual enterprises or by whole industries; coordinated actions on a local, regional, national or international scale; coordinated actions for the organisation of the economic struggle of the workers, carrying out of mass political actions, for the organisation of joint self-defence against fascist attacks; coordinated actions in rendering aid to political prisoners and their families, in the field of struggle against social reaction; joint actions in the defence of the interests of the youth and women, in the field of the cooperative movement, cultural activity, sport, etc.<sup>1</sup>

Anti-fascist tasks were made central to the policy of joint action by the proletariat. The fate of the unity, it was pointed out, depended above all on proper relations among the communist, and socialist and social-democratic parties, which were backed up by the majority of organised workers in capitalist countries. The task was to ensure unity of the workers at every industrial enterprise, in every district, every region, and every country.

Joint actions by these parties at all levels (local, national and international) was visualised no longer as a means of establishing proletarian or worker-peasant power, but as a means of countering the offensive by the financial oligarchy and protecting democracy and the gains of the working people, as a means of eliminating the threat of war and fascism. Viewed in historical perspective, this provided conditions for a socialist revolution and offered real support to the nations oppressed by imperialism, especially in colonies and semicolonies. For the sake of unity, the Congress favoured the idea of setting up common trade unions that would be independent of political parties organisationally (but not neutral in the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie) on the condition that these trade unions would conduct the class struggle and trade-union democracy would be observed in them.

Another purpose of joint actions with social-democratic parties was to level serious and well argued criticism at reformism as the ideology and practice of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie and patiently to explain to the social-democratic workers the principles and programme of the communist movement. Pursuance of a united workers' front policy opened up possibilities for future unification

<sup>1</sup>Georgi Dimitroff, *The United Front. The Struggle Against Fascism and War*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1938, pp. 35-36.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

of workers' parties into one revolutionary party of the proletariat on terms ensuring its Marxist-Leninist and genuinely internationalist character.

Joint actions by organised workers were viewed as the basis of a united front, since non-organised masses constituted the majority of the proletariat in many countries. Hence the task to set up not only extra-party class organs of a united front but a large body of worker activists. At the same time, the Communists should not give up independent work on communist education, organisation and mobilisation of the masses.

In the conditions of the mounting threat of fascism and war, the struggle against sectarianism, which often was no longer an "infantile disorder" but a deep-rooted vice "which must be shaken off or it will be impossible to solve the problem of establishing the united front of the proletariat",<sup>1</sup> became an indispensable condition for strengthening the communist parties.

#### *The Anti-Fascist Popular Front*

Establishment of the united workers' front was part of the policy of building a broad popular front against fascism and imperialist war. Such a front was visualised by the Congress as a broad inter-class alliance of all forces that had come out against fascism, for peace. Defending bourgeois democracy in the struggle against fascism, the Communists defended, above all, the gains of the working people and expected the defeat of the more imperialist elements of big capital to deepen democracy, so that the general democratic demands of the popular masses would exceed the limits of bourgeois-democratic freedoms and approach the socialist goals. The popular front was seen not as a traditional alliance or a combination of bourgeois and social-democratic parties under a bourgeois leadership, but as a militant mass movement, as a new type of alliance in which the working class would have the leading role to play. Such a movement, in political terms, could be shaped in a coalition of anti-fascist socio-political organisations which would strive for power in order to build the nucleus of an anti-fascist government. The popular front governments would be different from reformist left-wing bourgeois governments, for they would be formed to further the general democratic interests of all working people and the petty bourgeoisie. To prevent a victory of fascism was the chief purpose of the front. The popular front governments fighting against fas-

cism and the war danger everywhere would play different roles in various countries, but in all cases they would help attain the transitional political goal reaching beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy. The Congress believed that, on definite conditions, the communist parties could take part in these governments. However, the Seventh Congress did not consider such a government to be an inevitable stage for all countries on their path to socialism and did not rule out a possibility of socialist revolutions in individual countries, provided domestic and international conditions were favourable for that.

The line towards establishing popular front governments as a transitional regime aimed at eliminating the threat of fascism and setting the stage for future socialist reforms, was a valuable contribution by the Seventh Congress of the Comintern to the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on ways of approaching, and leading the popular masses to, a socialist revolution in capitalist countries.

#### *The Anti-Imperialist Front in Colonies and Semicolonies*

The Seventh Congress paid special attention to the specifics of the struggle for peace, and against imperialism and the fascist menace in the colonial and semicolonial countries. It closely associated the national liberation struggle in the colonies and semicolonies with the anti-fascist and anti-war struggle that was going on throughout the world. Therefore the united front slogan for these countries was specified as a slogan of a united anti-imperialist front. For this reason the Congress somewhat modified its view of the possibilities for the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie to join a united anti-imperialist front. It rejected the sectarian assertion that the national bourgeoisie had totally betrayed the cause of the anti-imperialist movement.

The Congress showed it was necessary to take into account the diverse conditions in which the anti-imperialist struggle was conducted in different countries, the varying degree of the maturity of the national liberation movement, the role the proletariat played in it, and the influence of its revolutionary party on the popular masses. Aware of the imminent aggression on the part of Japan, the Congress set the task of building the widest possible anti-imperialist front together with all forces prepared to fight for the salvation of their countries and peoples. The Congress recommended that the Communists take an active part in the popular anti-imperialist movements headed by national reformists and act jointly, in keeping with concrete programmes. The Congress oriented the parties to forming popular revolutionary anti-imperialist

<sup>1</sup>Georgi Dimitroff, *The United Front...*, p. 84.



governments with the participation of all classes and sections of society fighting for national liberation.

*The Significance of the Seventh Congress*

Having summed up the experience of the anti-fascist and anti-war popular actions and of Soviet efforts for peace and collective security, the Seventh Congress drew up a new offensive strategy. The goal of the democratic forces at that stage was to prevent an imperialist world war, to defeat fascism, the main warmonger, and to establish anti-fascist and anti-imperialist democratic regimes as transitional governments. The main blow was levelled at the chief source of the war danger—the more imperialist, chauvinist and reactionary elements of finance capital. The motive forces of the anti-fascist struggle were the working class, the peasants, intellectuals, the petty bourgeoisie and all democratic and anti-fascist elements, with the working class playing the leading role in the anti-fascist alliance. That strategy combined the struggle against fascism with the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress, regarding it as a general democratic stage which could in definite circumstances offer more favourable conditions for the subsequent struggle for the socialist revolution.

*Chapter Eight*

*Popular Fronts on the Eve of World War II*

The new anti-fascist, anti-war and anti-imperialist line drawn up by the Comintern at its Seventh Congress was pursued in practice in many countries where communist and workers' parties functioned. But the fullest and most instructive experience in this respect was gained by the communist parties of France, Spain, Chile, China and Vietnam. This does not mean that the experience of other parties and movements in those years is of no interest. On the contrary, it is also most valuable, and numerous studies and publications have been devoted to it. But in the countries listed above the communist parties managed to grow into an influential national force and left a notable imprint on the entire political life in their countries.

The favourable combination of foreign-policy and domestic factors in these countries brought about the alignment of forces which tipped the balance in favour of democracy and peace. The political situation at that time was conducive to setting up popular fronts as nation-wide movements. These movements in most cases checked the advance of fascism and led to the formation of popular front governments. These governments, relying on the movement "from below", set to carrying out progressive reforms "from above" and combating unemployment, which somewhat improved the low living standards of the people. They took measures to democratise the political regime, and this to a certain extent narrowed down the potential base of fascism and reaction, and blocked militarisation and imperialist war preparations. That practical experience, its strong and weak points, still evoke a great interest in our time, helping one to understand why in some countries imperialist reaction and militarism could be defeated, isolated and done away with, first limiting their influence on the masses, even if external conditions are relatively unfavourable for that, while in other countries this was not done, even when conditions were favourable for the left forces, Communists above all. Now that the working people are hit hard by the effects of the economic and structural crises of capitalism, and that the threat of a nuclear world war that may be unleashed by the US rulers and their NATO allies has grown many times over,

the practical experience of the struggle against militarism and fascism, for building up broad democratic alliances, is most valuable.

### *1. The People's Front in France*

The experience gained by the People's Front in France was of great significance for the entire working-class movement. It was a source of the new strategy and tactics devised by the Seventh Comintern Congress. The French Communist Party (PCF) was the first to elaborate the new tactics of struggle against the growing threat of fascism and war—the tactics of a united workers' and popular front.

The French monopoly bourgeoisie sought to establish a fascist dictatorship in France. But those plans were foiled due to a number of factors.

*First*, democratic traditions and institutions were far stronger in France than in Germany, while the political influence of monarchist and landlord reactionaries was much weaker.

*Second*, the economic situation in France in the 1930s was not as bad as it was, say, in Germany or Austria. The big bourgeoisie was not driven to hopelessness. France was hit by the world economic crisis later than other capitalist countries—at the end of 1930. Though in some industries production was cut back considerably, others were comparatively unperturbed.

*Third*, the French bourgeoisie had a mechanism of parliamentary democracy well adapted to defending its class interests. It still had room for manoeuvre within the limits of bourgeois democracy. Therefore a large part of the bourgeoisie did not support fascism.

*Fourth*, the numerous middle and petty bourgeoisie feared the revanchist programme of the German Nazis and associated their coming to power with the activities of fascists in France. The national patriotic sentiments of the middle, and especially petty, bourgeoisie, blocked mass support to fascism in the country. The traditional bourgeois parties, above all the Radicals and Radical-Socialists, kept these sections of society well under their influence.

*Fifth* and most important, the growing threat of a fascist coup and of a new imperialist war after the Nazis came to power in Germany set off an upswing of the anti-fascist and anti-war movement. It was joined by workers, a large part of the urban petty bourgeoisie, peasants and intellectuals, by all democratic forces in the country. Of no small significance was that the working-class movement in France had a consid-

erable influence on the middle sections. Therefore the tradition of participation in the movement by all the democratic sections of society was established there since the movement's inception.

The French Communist Party played an outstanding part in the anti-fascist movement. The Communists, having cleansed their party of both right- and "left"-wing revisionists, and thus making it stronger ideologically and organisationally, set out to draw the popular masses in the anti-fascist movement. In the first place, the Communists, despite the hostile stance of the right-wing leadership of the Socialist Party (SFIO), began to establish contacts with the socialist organisations at the grassroots level. The anti-fascist committees set up in the localities were joined by Communists, Socialists and non-party people.

On February 6, 1934, armed bands of fascists attempted a mutiny in Paris. They marched to the government buildings to dissolve the parliament, force the government to go and establish a fascist dictatorship. The popular masses interfered just in time to quash the mutiny. The main part in suppressing it was played by the proletariat, which had risen to defend the republic in response to a call from the PCF.

The French Communist Party believed that the fascists could be stopped on their way to power by joint actions of all contingents of the working class, all working people. It urged the Socialists to call a general political strike on February 9. But the right-wing socialist leaders still preferred parliamentary activities to direct popular action. The government banned the strike, and the Socialist Party leadership postponed it to February 12, Sunday. The PCF, bent on keeping the initiative of popular action, called upon the workers to stage an anti-fascist demonstration on February 9. The demonstrators fought heroically against the police and the fascists—6 persons were killed, 60 wounded and over one thousand beaten up. The demonstration, in which many socialist workers and members of reformist trade unions took part without prior arrangement, was a sign that the proletariat strove for joint action. This was confirmed by the general anti-fascist strike on February 12, in which over 4.5 million people took part. The right-wing socialist leaders attempted to break the strike, but all the contingents of the working class held out together. The anti-fascist mass movement was gaining momentum.

#### *Formation of the People's Front*

At the Socialist Party Congress in May 1934 many delegates spoke in favour of joint actions with the Communists. The



masses of working people were beginning to see the need for a broad alliance against fascism. On July 27, 1934, the Communists and Socialists concluded an agreement on joint actions against the fascist danger. Thus the foundation of a united workers' front was laid in France at the initiative of the PCF.

The agreement between the two parties provided for their joint struggle against the threat of fascism and war. To that end committees were set up to coordinate joint work, and mass actions, meetings, demonstrations and strikes were organised.

The joint actions by the two main parties of the working class added strength to the proletariat, expanding its influence on the middle strata. The anti-fascist movement was being joined by rank and file Radicals. Maurice Thorez, the PCF General Secretary, called upon the people of France to counter the front of reaction and fascism with the front of liberty, labour and peace. The People's Front was joined by a large part of the petty bourgeoisie. The Radical Party decided to join the Front.

To build up working-class unity and form a People's Front the split in the trade union movement had to be eliminated. A *sine qua non* for that was the agreement on joint actions between Communists and Socialists. The leadership of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) came under powerful grassroots pressure and could not go on declining the insistent unification proposals advanced by the communist-led Unity Confederation of Labour (CGTU). The united CGT was formed in 1936 and recognised the People's Front tactics. Its governing body included two Communists.

As working-class unity was built up, the PCF launched a vigorous campaign to draw in the anti-fascist movement peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie, and intellectuals—all those who refused to accept the plans devised by reaction. By contrast with Germany, a large part of the peasants and the urban middle strata did not support fascism and allied themselves with the proletariat in the struggle against reaction. Though the People's Front included diverse social elements, they all had a common goal of protecting the vital interests of the working people from reaction and defending democratic freedoms and peace.

In May 1935, the PCF sponsored a meeting of the left groups in Parliament (Communists, Socialists, Radicals, and other democrats), which demanded that fascist organisations be disbanded. On July 14, 1935, a national holiday, the People's Front supporters held demonstrations all over the country. Over two million people took part in the demonstrations.

The establishment of the People's Front in France clearly showed that unity of the working class and all the democratic forces ensured victory over fascism. The experience of the PCF's struggle for the united People's Front, summed up at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in the summer of 1935, was used extensively by the Communists in other countries.

The Eighth Congress of the PCF in January 1936 charted the general line of the Party towards rallying the French nation for the struggle against fascism and the war threat. The Congress advanced a militant slogan—"For the unity of the French people in the struggle against fascism, for democracy!"

On the insistence of the PCF the People's Front began to be shaped organisationally: the National Committee and departmental and local committees of the Front were set up. A programme of struggle against the threat of fascism and war, published in January 1936, envisaged the nationalisation of the Bank of France and other large banks; a reform of the taxation system with big capital carrying the main burden of taxation; the lifting of restrictions on the freedom of the press; political amnesty; disarmament and actual disbandment of fascist organisations; and improvement of the political and economic conditions of the colonial peoples.

The programme of the People's Front expressed the vital demands of the working people and provided for setting up a national fund for aid to the unemployed and organisation of public works, pensions for the old-aged working people, introduction of a forty-hour working week and collective agreements, fair prices of farm produce and measures to settle the debts of small shop owners.

In foreign policy, a series of measures were planned to eliminate the growing threat of a new world war, promote Franco-Soviet relations, and create a collective security system. Provisions were made for nationalising war industry, banning private arms dealing, etc.

#### *The People's Front Government*

The People's Front's programme united the democratic forces in France. The election to the Chamber of Deputies in April-May 1936 brought victory to the People's Front; 5.5 million people, or 56.6 per cent of the electorate, voted for its parties. The Communist Party won a landslide victory: about 1.5 million votes and 74 seats, which made it a mass national party.

The outcome of the 1936 parliamentary elections reflected popular opposition to fascism. But the People's Front was not stable enough, for the leaders of the Socialist and Rad-

ical parties entered it only under strong pressure from the working people. The Radicals were double-dealing: having entered the People's Front, they remained in the reactionary anti-popular government that functioned before 1936. Equally dual was the policy of the right-wing SFIO leaders: being at the head of the new government, they refused to give effect to the main provisions of the People's Front's programme. And all of them together were eroding the People's Front from within.

On June 7, 1936, Leon Blum, a Socialist, formed a government of Socialists and Radicals. The Communists declared their support to the government on the condition that it would carry out the programme of the People's Front. The Communists refused to enter the government, but that, as they admitted later, was a mistake. The tactics of pressurising the government from below only and not taking part in it, left the conciliators ample opportunities to obstruct the democratisation of the state apparatus. The working class launched its own struggle, not waiting for the government to act. The strike movement spread to almost all the major centres of the country. The workers occupied factories and posted guards, strictly fulfilling the instructions of the strike committees and the trade unions. The employers were forced to increase wages on the average by 15 per cent, grant the workers paid leaves (14 days a year), cut back the working week to 40 hours, and recognise collective agreements and the rights of trade-union representatives at the enterprises.

Pressed by the working people, the government carried out a few more provisions of the People's Front's programme. The salaries of minor officials at government offices, which had earlier been slashed by extraordinary decrees, were restored. The sale of the property of small traders and craftsmen in repayment of their debts was ended and easy-term credits were introduced. The state began to purchase farm produce somewhat stabilising the prices of farm goods. Besides, war industry was partially nationalised, a reform of the Bank of France was carried out, and credits were granted for public works. On June 9, 1936, the government confirmed the earlier issued decree banning fascist organisations.

But already the first measures to effect the programme of the People's Front came up against the fierce resistance of reaction that attempted to build up tensions which was exactly what the fascists wanted. The bourgeoisie sabotaged production, specifically the industries working for national defence. That was followed by the "drain of capital" abroad. The big bourgeoisie continued to finance fascist organisations which defied the decree on their disbandment and kept their leading organs, weapons and the press intact.

Pressed from the right, the Socialist government switched over to the policies contradicting the programme of the People's Front. Early in 1937, referring to the need to "consolidate" the measures taken, it announced a "respite". The right-wing Socialists turned down the Communists' proposal that the new offensive of reaction be countered by large-scale mass resistance and made a new manoeuvre. Leadership in the government passed to the Radicals, though its composition almost did not change.

Beginning with the latter half of 1937, a new economic crisis set in in France. The bourgeoisie was preparing vigorously to meet the working people's offensive and deliberately deepened the crisis by continuing the "capital drain" and sabotaging production. In October a new and widely ramified fascist plot was uncovered.

The working class, led by the Communist Party, responded by redoubling its efforts in the struggle to effect the programme of the People's Front. Strikes erupted anew. The PCF Congress, held in late December 1937, spoke for building up working-class unity and expanding and strengthening the People's Front. The Congress stressed the need for a single party of the working class.

The Communist Party indicated ways of making the People's Front stronger and more united. The Communists again proposed that grassroots organisations of the People's Front be formed, such as elective committees at factories and in populated localities, and that a national congress of all organisations comprising the People's Front be held. The congress would elect a standing committee to supervise government action.

But the Communists' demands were not heeded by the leadership of the Socialist and Radical parties. In April 1938 a government headed by right-wing Radical Edouard Daladier came to power. With the special powers granted him by the Chamber of Deputies, Daladier published emergency decrees contradicting the programme of the People's Front on November 16, 1938. Direct and indirect taxes were increased, and the forty-hour working week was cancelled. The working people hit back by staging a national day of protest on November 26, 1938. On November 30, the General Confederation of Labour called a 24-hour general strike, in which 4 million workers took part. The government responded by proclaiming the state of emergency in the country and militarising transportation and a number of industrial enterprises. It started a "purge", during which democratic-minded factory and office workers were laid off. Fascist organisations shook off all camouflage and operated openly now.



The anti-popular domestic policy was matched by a reactionary foreign policy. Daladier closed the French-Spanish border, thus contributing to the defeat of Republican Spain and betraying the interests of the French people—the victory of the fascist regime in Spain increased the threat of aggression for France. By signing the Munich Pact on September 30, 1938, the Daladier government violated the treaty with Czechoslovakia on mutual assistance and in fact rendered the Franco-Soviet pact null and void. This sharply worsened France's political standing in the world and its military strategic position in the face of the mounting threat of attack by Nazi Germany.

The Radicals and right-wing Socialists eroded the Front from within. The Communist Party called for strengthening the People's Front by enlarging it, by drawing into it all patriotic forces, invigorating the activities of the local committees and stepping up direct mass actions, but it did not have enough strength to carry out all this in practice.

#### *Historic Significance of the People's Front*

The French workers failed to preserve the People's Front, but its experience and the lessons drawn from that experience are of great significance today. The working class and other working people won significant social, economic and cultural gains during the rule of the People's Front. Social legislation adopted at that period helped to effect democratic post-World War II reforms in 1945-1947. Many of the reforms have retained their significance to this day. The attempt to establish fascist dictatorship in the country was defeated. The alliance of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie strengthened the bourgeois-liberal parliamentary republic, and political life in the country shifted to the left, though that shift failed to be consolidated.

The departure of the Socialist and Radical parties from the programme of the People's Front caused its disintegration, after which France was defeated by Nazi Germany. The People's Front proved incapable of wresting the main economic levers from the financial oligarchy. Therefore reaction was able to sabotage the reforms and shift onto the People's Front the responsibility for the economic difficulties, which drove the middle strata away from the Front and spread disillusionment among part of the working people. The government failed to effect democratisation of the state apparatus and the army command, which gave the reactionaries and fascist agents a chance to undermine the bourgeois-democratic regime from within and prepare the ground for surrender to Hitler. The pacifism and anti-communism of the

Socialist Party leaders prevented them from playing a due part in ensuring the country's defence capability.

The People's Front had definite drawbacks and weak points in yet another sphere. The October 1947 Plenary Meeting of the PCF Central Committee noted that opposition on the part of the leaders of the Socialist and Radical parties made it impossible to set up elective committees of the People's Front and hold its national congress. As a result, the Front appeared to be a higher echelons' coalition, which made it easier for the reactionaries to split the democratic forces and prevent the full implementation of the Front's programme.

Nevertheless, the People's Front paved the way to militant cooperation of all patriotic forces in the anti-fascist Resistance movement in World War II.

#### *2. The Popular Front in Spain and the National-Revolutionary War*

Spain had been an imperialist power with colonies in Africa until the early 1930s. Together with France it waged a long and cruel colonial war against the freedom-loving Moroccan people. However, Spain itself had known the humiliation of defeat in the war against the US in the late 19th century and lost its richest colonies. After that it fell in economic dependence on Britain, the United States, Germany and France.

The incomplete bourgeois revolutions of the 19th century left the agrarian question unresolved. Latifundists dominated in farming and the peasants and farm-hands lived in appalling poverty. The rotten monarchy protected the interests of foreign monopolies and local landlords. But, unable to hold out against the mounting working-class movement and the protest actions by the oppressed nationalities, it decided to rely on the military dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, who had patently clear fascist leanings.

Behind that fascist trend were foreign, above all German and British, monopolies and the nascent Spanish financial oligarchy—all of them bonded with the landlord aristocracy. The upper crust of the Catholic church, the largest landowner and the share-holder of a number of monopolies and banks, readily backed up that trend. In this it was helped by the more reactionary army officers who had made a career in the colonial wars and were closely tied to big landlord property. And, finally, the pauperisation of the numerous parasitic nobility and clergy, the large number of lumpen-proletarians, and the impoverishment of ignorant peasants,

crushed by debts and enslaved by the church and landlords, provided mass support for that trend.

Spreading corruption and the inability of the military dictatorship to cope with the effects of the economic crisis, which was most painful for that backward country, and the upswing of the working-class movement brought about the fall of the dictatorial regime, and then the monarchy, and led to the proclamation of the Spanish Republic in 1931.

*The Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution and the  
Shaping of the Popular Front*

Fearing the working class, the bourgeois Republicans who headed the government did not wish to democratise the state machinery. They sought a way out of the crisis at the expense of the working people and refused to carry out agrarian reforms. The Socialist Party, firmly controlled by its right wing, pursued a conciliatory course and remained passive. That caused a swing of the backward segments of the population towards the right-wingers. Though the mutiny led by General Sanjurjo in 1932 failed, the fascists did form a mass party and called it Falange Espanola. The reactionaries, availing themselves of popular dissatisfaction with the passivity of the Republicans, achieved success in the parliamentary election of 1933.

But when the Republic was threatened by the right-wingers, the young working class rose to prevent the formation of an authoritarian government.

The Spanish working class was to a large extent engaged in manufactory and handicraft production. This accounted for the influence of anarchist traditions, on the one hand, and a notable impact of anarcho-sindicalist sentiments among the workers who followed the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (founded in 1879), on the other.

The young Communist Party (founded in 1920) had great difficulty in overcoming the anarchist, anarcho-sindicalist and conciliatory traditions. At last, the Spanish Communists headed by Jose Diaz managed, with assistance from the Comintern, to overcome sectarianism ideologically and organisationally (the sectarians oriented the Party to an immediate socialist revolution) and to establish firm ties with the major contingents of the working class, primarily with the miners of the Asturias, and with the industrial nucleus of the proletariat of the Basque Provinces, Catalonia, and the central and southern regions of the country. Many problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the Communist Party said, were not solved, and popular attention had to be focused precisely on their solution, as this was a necessary stage in

the country's advance to socialism. The Communists were at the head of the heroic rising of the Asturian miners in October 1934. The Red Guard units formed at their initiative broke the resistance of the government troops and liberated Oviedo, the central city in the province, and formed the worker-peasant government of the Asturias. A federal republic was proclaimed in Catalonia. However, the general strike called in protest against the right-wingers being in the government, and the armed actions in some other cities were isolated and therefore failed. The rising was cruelly stamped out: over 2,000 people were killed and more than 30,000 jailed.

But that was a Pyrrhic victory for the reactionaries: their offensive was stopped. During the anti-fascist actions the workers' unity with large sections of the democratic public was beginning to take shape. The second tide of the popular movement surged as early as mid-1935. An anti-fascist bloc of democratic parties was formed, and finally, in June 1935, the Communist Party proposed the formation of a popular front on the basis of a common programme which envisaged the abolition of landlord property rights, improvement of working conditions for workers and peasants, a guarantee of self-determination for the oppressed nationalities, and amnesty for political prisoners. In December 1935, a committee for contacts with the Socialist Party was set up on the insistence of the Communists. Late in 1935, joint demonstrations were held in many cities, demanding that these provisions of the programme be carried out. On that basis large trade unions were formed on the local level, in which Communists took part. In December 1935, the trade unions led by Communists and Socialists, merged in one trade-union centre. As the working people's actions reached their peak, the reactionary government was forced to resign at the end of 1935. In January next year, the Popular Front was formed and in February it won the parliamentary election.

*The Popular Front During the Fascist Mutiny*

The Popular Front included Communists, Socialists, left-wing Republicans, the General Labour Union (headed by Communists), and several small political groupings. The National Confederation of Labour (CNT), influenced by anarcho-sindicalists, refused to join the Front. The Socialists were opposed to forming an all parties' government, and so a left-wing Republican government was formed. It was as hesitant and incompetent as the 1931 government which took over from the monarchy. The fascists retained their positions in the army and in the state apparatus. Not waiting



for government decrees, the working people themselves set to effecting the long-awaited democratic reforms. Political prisoners were released. The workers were establishing control over industrial enterprises. The peasants were dividing the landlords' estates among themselves. Under popular pressure, the government issued decrees which prohibited the driving away of leaseholders and granted autonomy to the oppressed national regions.

Indecision, and even timidity, of the Republican government in effecting general democratic reforms gave rise to the spread of sectarian and ultra-left sentiments among the people, who for the first time were drawn in political activity and allowed themselves to be carried away by revolutionary phrases about an immediate introduction of socialism and federalism. There occurred ultra-left excesses with regard to the Catholic church and well-to-do farmers. Premature "socialist" and anarchist experiments scared away the middle strata, and so the social base of the Popular Front began to shrink.

That was used effectively and timely by the right-wingers, monarchists of all stripes, conservatives, landlords, the monopoly circles of the bourgeoisie, and the reactionary elite of the clergy—all who had lost the elections. Then out-and-out fascists emerged on the scene. They advocated suppression of the revolutionary-democratic movement by the force of arms, and received considerable support from German Nazism and Italian fascism. They were backed up also by the Anglo-American monopolies which operated in Spain and were terrified by the wide scope of the popular movement.

Well in keeping with the traditions of political life in Spain, reaction staked on a military coup. In July 1936, the colonial troops stationed in Morocco rose in mutiny against the Spanish Republic and were airlifted by German and Italian planes to the mother country where they seized the vital regions. At home they were supported by landlords, the clergy, the backward segment of the peasants and the middle strata. A greater part of the old state apparatus which blocked the progressive reforms of the Republican government, went over to the fascist insurgents headed by General Franco, commander of the colonial troops. But Franco failed to win over all of the army to his side. Some of the army units and almost the entire navy remained loyal to the Republic and opened their arsenals to arm the working people. A long national-revolutionary war of the Spanish people against fascism began.

The working class was in the forefront of resistance to fascism. The day after the mutiny began, the country was

paralysed by a general strike. Militia detachments, formed on the territory controlled by the Republicans, smashed fascist centres and eliminated the aftermath of sabotage. The Communist Party played the main role in organising the armed rebuff to the fascist mutiny.

On the eve of the mutiny, in May 1936, the Executive Committee of the Comintern discussed the situation in Spain. It supported the Communist Party's determination to carry through the democratic revolution with a prospect of forming a popular front government. It was recommended that the struggle should go on until the democratic and revolutionary forces would utterly defeat fascism and counter-revolution. The task was to isolate the fascists from the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, on whom the fascists largely relied, thus stamping out any source of support to counter-revolution.

In September 1936 the Comintern leadership analysed the anti-fascist struggle in Spain and noted that in the new historical conditions a democratic revolution grew deeper in content due to the strong influence of the working class and other working people. Therefore it would result not in establishing a democratic republic of an old type, but a new democratic republic. In case of victory, said Georgy Dimitrov, the Spanish Republic would be a special state with genuine people's democracy.<sup>1</sup> Thus Lenin's idea of transitional forms of state which exceed the limits of capitalism but are not yet socialist was developed, and a conclusion was drawn about the state of people's democracy being yet another transitional form.

At its Plenary Meeting in March 1937, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain reaffirmed the course of struggle "for a new type of democratic republic". Such a republic, it said, should do away with the financial and landlord oligarchy, nationalise the banks, transport, latifundia and basic industries. It should also give effect to universal suffrage and offer every man a chance to take part in the country's political and economic life.

As this programme was being carried into life, the anti-fascist, national and people's revolution concentrated its strikes on the most reactionary segment of finance capital, including big landlords. The democratic character of the revolution was deepened and the broadest popular masses were drawn in it. Now the Republicans could not only check the advance of the fascist mutineers, but push them to the brink of defeat.

<sup>1</sup> *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, 1969, No. 3, p. 13.

The deepening revolution put fear in the hearts of international capitalists, who sensed danger to their class domination in Spain. The fascist powers carried on their intervention openly. Fascist Italy sent to Spain 150,000 troops and a naval force, and Nazi Germany dispatched there tens of thousands of handpicked exterminators, including the best air force units. The so-called democratic states declared neutrality, which suited the mutineers only too well. The United States, for instance, delivered to the mutineers 12,000 trucks and about 2 million tons of fuel on credit. Meanwhile the export of arms and ammunition from the US, Britain and France to the Spanish Republic was prohibited.

All that demanded a greater unity of the Republican forces and an expansion of their social base. In those conditions the Communist Party agreed to enter the Popular Front government headed by the Socialists. The Communists sought to ensure loyal activities of all the Front members in the government (including anarchists). The Communists rebuffed any hegemonic ambitions and did not look upon their membership in the government as an end in itself. The Communist Party realised that in order to defeat fascism and ensure the unity of the Republican forces it might have to recall its representatives from the cabinet.

In August 1937, the Communist and Socialist parties signed a pact on joint actions, after which they enlisted participation of representatives of both trade-union centres (one headed by Socialists and Communists and the other by anarcho-syndicalists) in the government. Mass organisations took part in economic management, state administration and the build-up of the defence potential. Unfortunately, the anarcho-syndicalists defied the agreement on joint actions and long remained in opposition to the Popular Front, obstructing the united actions by the working class.

The ongoing foreign intervention made it imperative that a republican regular army be formed in the place of people's militia, and the Spanish Republic be made one large military camp. The social base of the Republicans had to be expanded by winning over the peasants. A large part of the peasants, influenced by the church, were either passive or hostile towards the Republic. To win them over to the Republic, they had to be provided with land. So, a democratic agrarian reform was carried out on the territory controlled by the Republicans—the latifundia were abolished and land was given to the peasants. The government introduced state control over middle and small business.

The Communist Party made great sacrifices for the sake of

building a regular and efficient people's army with political commissars in it. The Communists formed the Fifth Regiment, which then became a training centre of the military cadres for the Republic.

Internationalist solidarity of the USSR, the communist movement and the anti-fascist forces the world over with the suffering people of Spain helped the Spanish Republic a great deal to offer a long and stubborn resistance to the armed aggression by the fascist powers. The international brigades, too, were of great help in building up the Republic's defence capacity. Among the 35,000 internationalists from 53 countries, some of whom fell in battle, were Italian Luigi Longo, Hungarian Mate Zalka, Cuban Pablo de la Torriente Brau, Irishman Michael O'Riordan, and Rodion Malinovsky, who later became the USSR Minister of Defence, and many other Soviet military experts. Soviet aircraft, tanks, anti-aircraft weapons and ammunition helped the Republicans to hold out against the fascist aggression and the blockade by France, Britain and the USA.

But the vacillation of the petty bourgeoisie undermined the Republic. The passive opportunism of the Republicans with regard to bourgeois nationalists brought on tragedy to the Basque Country, which was cut off from the rest of the Republic and seized by the invading forces. The "socialist experiments", syndicalisation of production and forced collectivisation in farming conducted by anarchists, Trotskyites, and ultra-left Socialists, and the excesses they committed in regard to the church and the clergy narrowed down mass base for the Republicans. In May 1937 they attempted a counter-revolutionary coup in Catalonia, which was a stab in the back and weakened the Republic's defences, doing a good service to the invaders. After the country's northern part was lost to the enemy, capitulatory tendencies increased in the Popular Front. In March 1938 the military junta staged a coup which spelled the end of the Republic in 1939.

#### *The Lessons of the Popular Front Policy in Spain*

In the last years of the Republic, the Communist Party came up with a slogan of a national front. But the time was running out and the Republic's territory was shrinking. So the idea remained unrealised. The subsequent experience of the anti-Hitler coalition and national anti-fascist resistance during World War II proved that the concept was productive as a logical continuation of the Popular Front's policy.

Though the foreign intervention and blockade defeated the Spanish Republic and a counter-revolutionary fascist dictatorship of General Franco set in to stay for many years,



the experience of the Popular Front in Spain is of great significance.

That was the first open battle between anti-fascist forces and the forces of fascist reaction, in which the former relied on the state machinery and effective international solidarity (including the formation of international brigades and invitation of foreign military experts to the Republican army). The defeat of the Republic was brought about not so much by the mistakes the Republicans had made, but mainly by adverse external factors (armed intervention by Germany and Italy, and "neutrality" of the ruling quarters of the USA, Britain and France). However, the experience of armed anti-fascist resistance made it possible to subsequently launch an effective resistance movement in the countries occupied by the fascists during the war. That experience was used in formulating the basic principles of the anti-Hitler coalition and served as a useful lesson for the communist parties in drawing up the concept of a national democratic revolution growing into a socialist revolution in a number of European and Asian countries.

That was the first ever instance of Communists being members of a popular front government in the conditions of a national-revolutionary war against the fascist aggressor. The experience of those years showed that the unity of the working class and its alliance with the peasants, the urban middle strata and the anti-fascists among the bourgeoisie could not only stop fascism but make the democratic revolution deeper in content. A people's democratic republic, albeit in a rudimentary form, was established for the first time in Spain. It carried out profound social and economic reforms and did all to give the people a real opportunity to take part in running the country.

### *3. The Popular Front in Chile*

The setting up of the Popular Front in Chile, its victory in the 1938 presidential elections, and the formation of the Popular Front government were the outstanding victories of the working class and the democratic forces of Latin America on the eve of World War II.

In the other Latin American countries the anti-fascist and anti-imperialist forces failed to unite in one front in the 1930s. Nevertheless, the unity of the democratic forces in Mexico and the support rendered by the organised workers' movement of that country helped the government to stamp out a fascist mutiny there in 1938. The government nationalised, for the first time in Latin America, the British and

North American oilfields and set up a government-owned oil company. The railways, too, were nationalised. The rising wave of strikes of agricultural workers induced the government to give a fresh start to the agrarian reform which, proclaimed back in 1915, had long been held back. Farm co-operatives, including those in which land was cultivated jointly, were set up on the estates taken away from the landlords, primarily Spaniards. The government granted the co-operatives credits on easy terms. A united trade-union centre was established after long years of internecine struggle. The trade-union centre, in which Communists took part, helped achieve unity in the Latin American trade-union movement, and the Latin American Confederation of Labour was set up in 1938. But due to right-wing opportunist mistakes made by the leaderships of the Communist Party and the trade unions, the Mexican working class failed to head the general democratic and anti-imperialist movement and came under the influence of bourgeois nationalists. That caused divisions in the working class and among the left forces. The wave of the democratic movement in Mexico began to subside.

The anti-fascist struggle was most successful in Chile, where the working class played a decisive role in uniting all the democratic forces. Chile was a dependent capitalist country where precapitalist vestiges were still strong. Nonetheless its well developed workers' movement had revolutionary traditions dating back to the past century. When the pro-American dictator was toppled in Chile in 1932, a "socialist republic" was proclaimed there and people's power bodies were formed in 12 cities. The new government issued decrees opening up opportunities for building a state sector in the economy. But at the end of the year, the financial oligarchy, the big bourgeoisie, the large landowners who had gone bourgeois, and agents of foreign monopolies staged a counter-revolutionary coup which thus strengthened their power in the country. Nazis recruited their agents from among a large colony of German immigrants that existed in Chile. They founded a fascist party in Chile in the early 1930s.

In that situation the Communist Party proposed to the Socialist Party in early 1935 that they form a popular front to stop fascism, improve living standards for the working people and democratise political life. But the Socialist Party, just like the petty-bourgeois party of Radicals, hampered the formation of a united front. Despite all that, the Communists, Socialists and Radicals were growing ever more united in the course of the large-scale mass actions staged by the working people, especially the strikes.

On March 19, 1936, the leadership of the Radical Party confirmed the decision on setting up the Popular Front with

the Communists. After that the leadership of the Socialist Party had to accept the idea of signing a popular front pact (before that, it promoted the idea of a left front and urged the establishment of a socialist republic in Chile).

The pact was signed by the Radical, Socialist, and Communist parties and by the group of so-called left Communists (Trotskyites).

Thus the efforts of the Communist Party and other left forces in Chile to build the Popular Front proved successful. For all the ideological differences among the parties, the Front was formed.

The three main goals of the Front were: to restore democratic freedoms and stave off fascist danger; to fight against imperialism; and to raise the excessively low living standards of factory and office workers, and ensure social justice.

Thus the Front's programme contained not only anti-fascist and anti-imperialist but also profoundly social demands. The leading force in the Chilean Popular Front was the working class, on which the Communist and Socialist parties relied in their activities. But the social base of the Front was petty-bourgeois for the most part. It was joined also by some sections of the non-monopoly bourgeoisie. In the rural areas the Front's positions were also very weak. The landlords held almost undivided sway, imposing their political views on peasants.

The 1937 parliamentary elections in Chile showed that the Popular Front parties had strengthened their positions considerably among the masses. They polled almost 47 per cent of the votes. But the reactionary forces still retained a majority in Congress.

The presidential elections in October 1938 were a major test for the People's Front. A month before the elections the fascists attempted to provoke a civil war in Chile in a bid to crush the democratic forces and establish a fascist regime. The putsch was quashed. Their defeat helped to bolster the positions of the Popular Front parties. At the presidential elections the Front's nominee polled 50.2 per cent of the votes. That victory was of vast significance for Chile and for the whole of Latin America. It was a heavy blow to reactionary forces and offered an encouraging example for the democratic elements in other Latin American countries.

After the elections the Radicals and Socialists formed the government (the Communist Party refused to enter the government, but declared its support for it).

However, the Popular Front did not enjoy full power. Its adversaries were in the majority in Congress, and the government measures to effect the Front's programme could not exceed the limits of the legislation that existed at the

time. The reactionary opposition in Congress smothered any bill that envisaged political democratisation or social reforms. The situation was made still worse when the national big bourgeoisie and foreign monopolies provoked economic and financial difficulties by winding down the output of minerals, shutting down part of industrial enterprises, and thwarting government measures. The landlords reduced the sown areas, destroyed part of the crops, and obstructed food supply to the population.

In that difficult situation the government managed to achieve positive results in home and foreign policies. Due to the mass actions by the workers and employees and the vigorous efforts by the government, the fascist plot in 1939 was suppressed. The top military command and the state apparatus were purged of fascist elements, though not completely.

The Popular Front government laid the foundations of the state sector in the economy within a brief span of time by making use of the 1932 decrees. A state corporation for economic development was established with the participation of delegates from the organised working class, and the manufacturing industry received a considerable impetus for growth. Appropriate mechanisms and institutions were established to protect it from foreign imperialist competition.

A good deal was achieved in medical care and public education. The living standards of the working people somewhat increased. In 1938-1940, the wages of industrial workers grew by 43 per cent; the salaries of civil servants, by 42 per cent; and those of the white-collar workers in the private sector, by 24 per cent. The working people in the cities were increasingly syndicalised, and the first trade unions of farm labourers were formed. The Confederation of Chilean Working People became a national organisation which staged the strikes and defended the immediate interests of the working people. Thus major democratic precedents and legal norms and elements were created in the political superstructure, and public consciousness began to change, which opened the way to the revolutionary process of the early 1970s.

The Popular Front in Chile lasted a relatively short time, but longer than such fronts in Western Europe. It disintegrated in 1940-1941 under the impact of adverse foreign-policy factors and domestic conditions. One of the causes behind its collapse was that the right-wing opportunist elements in the Socialist Party leadership launched, under pressure from the US, an anti-communist campaign and withdrew from the Front. That set off a chain reaction: the balance of forces in the Radical Party changed in favour of the right, bourgeois wing, and in 1941 the Front was disbanded.



Despite the defeat, the Popular Front in Chile played an important part in the development of the working-class movement in the country and in the whole of Latin America. The formation of the Popular Front made it possible to prevent the fascists from coming to power in Chile, to weaken somewhat the country's dependence on foreign capital and to lay the groundwork for the growth of national industry. The Popular Front government raised the living standards of the working people and strengthened the trade-union organisations and parties of the working class.

The Popular Front paved the way for establishing a democratic coalition in 1946, which won the elections and formed a government with Communists in it. The Popular Front laid the foundations of the state economic sector which was further developed in 1970-1973 under the Popular Unity government headed by President Salvador Allende Gossens.

Not everywhere in Latin America was it possible to unite the democratic and anti-imperialist forces and stop the offensive of reaction and imperialism. In Nicaragua, for instance, the US imperialists and their local agents engineered a temporary defeat of the anti-imperialist forces. In that small country of Central America, which had been occupied by US troops since 1909, the people launched a war against the aggressors in 1927. The army of patriots was headed by Augusto Cesar Sandino, a worker and a remarkable commander who effectively guided guerrilla operations. The invaders were forced out of Nicaragua in 1932, but they left a puppet army there—the so-called national guards. The US Embassy used the guards to assassinate Sandino and his comrades-in-arms in 1934. In 1936 the country was seized by North American stooge Garcia Somoza, commander of the national guards and an admirer of Mussolini. Somoza and his offspring established a cruel dictatorship and ruled the country until the victory of the popular revolution in 1979.

#### *4. The Policy of a United Anti-Imperialist Front in Colonial and Semicolonial Countries of the East*

In the colonial and semicolonial countries of the East, the progressive forces, especially Communists, were rallying the anti-imperialist forces. The targets of their main blows were the Japanese imperialists, German Nazis and Italian fascists, who had started colonial wars, were planning to enslave the peoples of Asia and Africa.

Japan occupied North-Eastern China as early as 1931, established a puppet "state" there and began to annex prov-

inces in Northern China. The Japanese imperialists planned to make the whole of China their colony. They also intended to enslave the peoples of the Philippines, Indochina, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaya, Burma, India, Oceania, and the Soviet Far East and Siberia. The imperialists of the United States, Britain and France expected that the Japanese militarists would strangle the Chinese revolution and so enfeeble the national liberation movement in Asia. Therefore they connived at the Japanese aggression in China in the hope of provoking Japan to attack the USSR and canalising its aggression northward.

The Italian fascists, backed up by Nazi Germany and with the connivance of Britain and France, launched a colonial war against the Ethiopian people. Hitler Germany planned a colonial enslavement of the Middle East and Africa.

#### *Efforts to Build a United National Anti-Japanese Front in China*

Japanese imperialism made use of the prolonged civil war in China to occupy it region by region. The Kuomintang government, aided by German military advisers, dispatched expeditions to the communist-controlled regions. The sectarian mistakes of the Communists made it easier for the Kuomintang government to establish its rule over Southern and Central China.

In 1934-1935, the main forces of the Communists' army, pressed hard by the overwhelming Kuomintang forces, had to leave their strong points in Southern and Central China and go North-West towards the border with Mongolia. After the arrest of the Shanghai Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in 1935, the Communists' ranks were in disarray.

In those circumstances the delegation of the Communist Party of China in the Comintern Executive Committee assumed the guidance of the Chinese Communists' activities, helping them to restore the unity of the party and its leadership. During the Seventh Comintern Congress the CPC delegation drew up with the help of the Comintern Executive Committee an "Appeal of the CPC to the Nation on Rebuffing Japan and Saving the Motherland" (August 1, 1935). The appeal marked a turn towards the policy of united front. The Communist Party called upon all parties and political and military groupings in China to end the civil war and rally all forces for resistance to Japan and for salvation of the country. The Communist Party formulated the policy of united national anti-Japanese front. It proposed that a national defence government and a united anti-Japanese army be formed. Meanwhile a mass anti-imperialist movement for basic demands had to be organised. That meant that the

united front would include also the Kuomintang grouping of Chiang Kai-shek, the strongest one militarily, as a precondition for ending the civil war. The Communist Party deemed it necessary to overcome the ultra-left sectarian mistakes and bring its policy in accord with the new tasks. Thus the Communist Party began the turn from the agrarian revolution to the national war against the Japanese aggressors.

The Japanese imperialists set out to annex Northern China in 1935, which made the Chinese end the civil war in order to concentrate all their forces in the anti-Japanese national front. The Communist Party of China was objectively faced with the need to give up its former tactics of fighting on two fronts—against Kuomintang and Japanese imperialism. At that time various groups of the ruling circles, faced with the British and US connivance at the Japanese aggression, were compelled to revise their course, realising that Soviet support would not be forthcoming unless they ended the war against the Communist Party and its army.

In December 1936, the Japanese imperialists attempted to provoke a new outbreak of the civil war in China. Part of the Communists with Mao Zedong at the head displayed political nearsightedness and swallowed the bait. But the Comintern helped to thwart the Japanese attempt, and the civil war was practically ended. That enabled the Communists and Kuomintang to reach some understanding on setting up a united front, which was most timely because in July 1937 Japan moved its forces to North-Western, Northern, Central and Southern China.

Way back in February 1937, the CPC Central Committee offered Kuomintang to end the civil war completely and muster all forces to drive back the aggressor, to guarantee the freedom of speech, assembly, and associations, to release political prisoners, and improve the living conditions of the people. The Communists proposed also that a conference of representatives of all political parties, groups, sections of the population, and all armed forces be convened with a view to organising joint struggle to save the motherland. They demanded the speediest preparations for a joint anti-Japanese war. The Communist Party announced it was prepared to end all hostilities against the Kuomintang government, and to rename its government a government of the Special Region of the Chinese Republic, and its army the 8th National-Revolutionary Army, not to confiscate the estates of the landlords, and to carry out a united front programme.

Cooperation between Kuomintang and the Communist Party was established in September 1937. Kuomintang recognised the legal status of the CPC, the special border region and the armed forces of the Communist Party.

The establishment of the united anti-Japanese front was a great achievement of the patriots, above all the Communists.

But Kuomintang refused to draw up a common programme of the united front and build its organisational structure. It declined also the Communists' proposal on their entering Kuomintang officially and demanded that before entering Kuomintang the Communists should leave the Communist Party and renounce Marxist ideology. The Chiang Kai-shek men treacherously violated the agreement with the Communist Party and began reprisals against Communists on the territory they controlled, thus helping the Japanese aggressors to seize Central and Southern China. In that situation the leadership of the Communist Party, especially Mao Zedong, made right-wing opportunist and then sectarian mistakes. In 1936-1937, some leaders of the Communist Party interpreted the policy of united front as renunciation by Communists of their class positions for the sake of "national unity". They were inclined to view Kuomintang as an organisation of the united front and agreed to dissolving the Communist Party in it. With the help of the Comintern that wrong stance was rectified.

But by that time a sectarian approach to Kuomintang began to spread. Simultaneously, the Communist Party, which operated in backward rural areas and was losing its positions in large industrial centres, opened the door wide to petty-bourgeois and even landlord elements, who were attracted by the slogans of vigorous struggle against the Japanese invaders. That had a negative effect on the class make-up of the party, and its theoretical level declined. It became susceptible to infection by petty-bourgeois nationalist ideology to the detriment of the internationalist positions. Thus the policy of united front was distorted in practice in a petty-bourgeois nationalist spirit and faced the threat of being frustrated altogether.

All measures to establish a united anti-Japanese front in practice were obstructed on both sides. This became most evident in 1938, and the Japanese aggressors did not miss their chance to use the situation and established control over the vital centres of China. In this Japan was assisted by the ruling circles of Britain and the United States that hoped to direct the Japanese aggressors to the North and provoke a war between Japan and the Soviet Union. Therefore neither Britain nor the USA nor France extended any tangible aid to China, the victim of aggression. The Soviet Union was the only country to grant the Chinese government military aid, in particular by providing aircraft and helping organise anti-aircraft defence.



Though the idea of forming a united anti-Japanese front in China was not fully realised in practice, still the cessation of the civil war helped immensely to mobilise the people of China for repulsing the aggressor. The plans of the Japanese imperialists to dissect China and swallow it up bit by bit, with the help of the Chinese themselves, were foiled. Japan had to wage a long and exhausting war in China which it failed to win.

The formation of the united anti-Japanese front helped the Chinese people to contribute to the victory over fascism in World War II. The anti-Japanese front provided the basis for setting up a united Popular Democratic Front and establishing the People's Republic of China in 1949.

#### *Efforts to Form a Democratic Front in Indochina*

The 1930 conference, at which the Communist Party of Vietnam was formed, adopted the programme and brief theses of the party drawn up by Ho Chi Minh. These documents were used as the basis for the subsequent elaboration by the party of the concept of an anti-imperialist alliance, that is, a united national anti-imperialist front.

After the victory of the People's Front in France and the formation of its government, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, proceeding from the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, introduced changes in the tactics employed by the party. The anti-imperialist people's front of Indochina was reorganised into the Democratic Front of Indochina. The front comprised all democratic and progressive forces that had come out against enemy number one—the French fascists and their local accomplices in the colonies. These forces fought against fascist aggression, for civil rights, for a better life for the people and world peace. The Communist Party called for a full use of legal and semilegal opportunities to organise the popular masses and strengthen the party organisations operating underground.

By properly combining legal, semilegal and clandestine forms of work, the party helped to set up action committees, and insisted on convening a congress of the peoples of Indochina. It demanded at meetings and rallies that the People's Front government in France carry out democratic reforms and raise the living standards of the people. That compelled the colonial authorities to release many political prisoners and create conditions enabling the democratic forces in the colonies to operate legally. The Communist Party of Indochina, the Democratic Front of Indochina and the Democratic Youth Association began to publish their

press and Marxist-Leninist literature legally. They established contacts with petty-bourgeois political parties, democratic elements among the bourgeois intellectuals and with the section of the Socialist Party of France in Indochina. In 1936-1939, the strike movement was spreading rapidly. The striking workers demanded a 9-hour working day, better living conditions, and freedom to form organisations. The mass demonstrations of workers and intellectuals were joined also by peasants, who demanded cuts in the rent and taxes. The Communist Party used legal opportunities for revolutionary activities, taking an active part in the consultative bodies appointed by the colonial authorities, such as "chambers of people's representatives" and "colonial administration councils".

The campaign for setting up the Democratic Front of Indochina enabled the party to form and educate a mass political army for the future revolution and was the "second dress rehearsal of the August Revolution".

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#### *The Lessons of the People's Anti-Fascist Fronts*

The practical implementation of the people's front policy in advanced capitalist, dependent, colonial and semicolonial countries is most useful in our day as well. It shows that the struggle against fascism, imperialist war, and the colonialist plunder by the monopolies, for peace and democracy must not be viewed in isolation from, and still less be opposed to, the struggle for national liberation and social emancipation, for the revolutionary renovation of society.

Fascism offered the popular masses driven to despair not a real but an illusory way out of the crisis. In reality, it was pushing them into the abyss of world war, threatening to return mankind many ages back to the time of medieval barbarity. The united workers', popular and anti-imperialist fronts against fascism and war, against the seizure of colonies could curb the instigators of world war. In the advanced capitalist countries the united workers' fronts could contribute to overcoming the divisions in the proletariat and ensuring its leading role in the general democratic, anti-fascist movement. This, in turn, could help to pave the way to socialism.

In the dependent countries of medium capitalist development, as the example of Spain and Chile has shown, the united popular fronts against the fascist threat could help strengthen national sovereignty and solve outstanding general democratic problems. In future this revolutionary pro-

cess could grow into a socialist revolution passing through the necessary transitional phases.

In the colonial and semicolonial countries of the East, the united anti-imperialist and democratic fronts offered broad opportunities for these peoples to exercise their right to self-determination, for eliminating colonial and semicolonial oppression, for the young working class becoming a leader in building national states, which, in its turn, opened prospects for advancement towards socialism.

So, the policy of united front, designed to deliver mankind from the threat of world war, opened up broad vistas to the democratic forces in the struggle for national and social progress, while taking duly into account national specifics and the alignment of forces in each country.

Regrettably, the right-wing leaders of social-democracy, and leaders of bourgeois parties refused to accept the Communists' proposals and implement the united front policy in practice. The historic chance to avert the world war and speed up progressive reforms was lost that time. The fascist aggressor built the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis, started World War II, and conquered the greater part of Europe and Asia, including France, Spain, and major regions of China.

And still, the people's fronts provided preconditions for rallying all democratic forces in the powerful anti-Hitler coalition of the United Nations, and for boosting anti-fascist resistance in the occupied countries. Thus the people's fronts paved the way to the victory over fascism in 1945.

The experience of the people's fronts is valuable in our days as well, for it helps, even though the situation is so different now, to bring together the opponents of nuclear war, opponents of fascism and imperialist aggression, and the champions of peace, democracy and the freedom of nations.

The policy of people's front taught Communists, Social Democrats and Socialists to overcome differences. Without renouncing their ideology, they sought and found effective ways and means for political cooperation to implement the joint programme of overcoming the consequences of the economic crisis, improving the conditions of the working people, protecting and extending democratic freedoms, and eliminating the war threat. Today, this experience and this programme are as important as they have always been, though the conditions are far more favourable today for the cause of peace and democracy. In their joint actions against the war danger, for democracy and social progress, Communists and Socialists draw on the lessons of the 1930s—the victories and setbacks of those years.

Those lessons tell us that not only objective circumstances related to home and foreign policy matters were in the

way of the formation of people's fronts in various countries. The drawbacks and mistakes of the Communists and other democratic and anti-fascist forces, too, played a negative role. The sources of those mistakes had been revealed by Lenin: those were mainly sectarian mistakes caused by inability to approach the popular masses, especially the petty bourgeoisie or the people having petty-bourgeois prejudices. At times Communists believed that what was outdated to them was outdated to the people, and were too hasty to advance slogans of a higher order, losing contact with the masses. This had an especially negative effect in the late 1930s in a number of West European countries. Another drawback was timidity in probing into new spheres and forms of struggle. But unless every area and method of struggle is mastered, victory cannot be won. And, last but not least, right-wing opportunist mistakes (as in China, Mexico and Chile) narrowed the scope of popular action and, in the conditions of the economic crisis, gave the right-wing and even fascist elements a chance to build up their influence, especially on the numerous petty bourgeoisie.

The experience of those years shows also that a democratic coalition must not confine itself to winning relative superiority. Such superiority is unstable and therefore can be easily lost. Democratic forces should seek to achieve decisive and stable superiority in every-day struggle, even in "minor deeds", not only on a national but also on a local scale, and steadily to win ever greater social backing. In those years, for instance, the Communists formulated a policy of "extending a hand" to the believers, but it was never sealed by a firm handshake. Today, in the struggle against the war threat, for civil liberties and national independence, in the struggle for the immediate demands of the working people, believers and non-believers act together. And the front of joint actions has been expanding.

The experience of the people's fronts tells us that one should not be content with joint actions by democratic forces "from below". These should be complemented by cooperation "from above", on parliamentary, governmental, national, regional and municipal levels.



## Chapter Nine

### *Communists' Effort for a Broad Democratic Anti-Fascist Front in World War II*

World War II was a severe trial for many nations and for the international communist, working-class and national liberation movements. It was a trial of the viability and strength of the nations taking part in it. The fates of socialism, of civilisation and the future just world were decided in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans. It was the most destructive and bloody of all previously known wars—prepared by the forces of world imperialist reaction and unleashed by the leading aggressor states: Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and militarist Japan.

*The huge human and material losses and casualties inflicted by World War II is a stern and tragic accusation of the capitalist system that had engendered it and a grave warning to all those who fail to draw relevant conclusions from the tragic past for the sake of future civilisation.*

#### *1. The Major Contribution of the Socialist Social System and Communists to the Liberating Anti-Fascist Struggle and Unity of Nations*

##### *Communists on the Origin and Socio-Political Character of World War II*

Wars—particularly world wars—bear the imprint of the historical epoch. World War I, thus, bore the imprint of the epoch of imperialism. The origin and character of World War II stemmed from the content and cardinal features of the current epoch—the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. It reflected the principal feature of this period that Lenin defined as the shifting of the emphasis in international affairs to the area of confrontation between two diametrically opposite social systems. The contradictions between capitalist states and groupings had ceased to be the single factor of world politics. The principal contradiction of the new historical stage, that of class opposition between the new social system, socialism, and the old, capitalism,

predetermined interrelationships of nations, the entire world system of nations and the outcome of class conflicts and battles.

Nazi Germany became the strike force of world imperialist reaction and the instigator of World War II. It was the nucleus of the aggressive Anti-Comintern Pact, the bloc embracing also Italy and Japan and later some European states with fascist or para-fascist regimes.

Planning a cardinal redivision of the world, German imperialists had in mind not only the colonies of their imperialist rivals but also domination over vast regions in various continents beginning with Europe. German fascists and nationalists advanced theories and plans aiming at seizures of Lebensraum and establishment of a “new order”, which they intended to achieve through several stages: win the dominant position in Central Europe, build a continental empire stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals, and establish world supremacy.

Militarist Japan was not far behind Hitler Germany. For many years, it had staged acts of aggression in the Soviet Far East, China and other Asian states. It was preparing for a big war in which it would seize Soviet Far Eastern territory and Siberia reaching as far as the Urals. True, the rout suffered by crack Japanese troops in a battle with Soviet troops at Lake Khassan in 1938 and with joint Soviet and Mongolian forces at the river Khalkhin-Gol in 1939, had a somewhat sobering effect on Japanese militarists. At the same time, the Japanese economy was facing considerable difficulties, first of all shortage of markets and raw materials. Japanese monopolies were coming into sharp conflict with major capitalist countries, particularly the United States. Japanese militarists were eager to oust their European and US imperialist rivals from East Asian and Southeast Asian markets and to build their own colonial empire in their place.

The Comintern, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the Soviet government did all in their power to prevent a second world war. They worked to mobilise the international communist movement and all progressive and democratic organisations to defend peace against advancing fascist aggression. This great political effort brought forth an upsurge of the anti-fascist movement within the anti-Hitler coalition. It encouraged the rise of Resistance in the countries enslaved by fascists and Japanese militarists and ruled by those who had betrayed national interests. It was a major positive force in the formation and strengthening of those progressive revolutionary forces that later headed the nations liberated from the fascist or Japanese yoke and played a decisive role in their destinies.

The CPSU and the Soviet government had to wage a difficult struggle at the international front. The Soviet Union sought to halt aggression through the League of Nations, despite the fact that it had shown itself inadequate in the face of aggressions in Ethiopia (Abyssinia), Spain, China and Austria. The Soviet government advocated collective security, bilateral treaties and agreements. All its efforts, however, had been frustrated by the Western powers.

The Munich settlement<sup>1</sup> of September 28, 1938 was a culminating point. It exposed the true aims of the major imperialist powers. The Soviet Union had repeatedly declared its readiness to help Czechoslovakia irrespective of whether its capitalist allies were prepared to do likewise. The allies betrayed Czechoslovakia, while the country's bourgeois government rejected the offer of aid from the socialist state.

The Western powers' European policies were in full accord with their policy of "appeasing" the aggressor in Asia. Under the terms of the July 1939 agreement with Japan, Britain recognised Japanese seizures in China and consented to the use of Chinese territory for waging military activities against the USSR and the Mongolian People's Republic. Imperialist policy in Asia pursued the same aim as in Europe—to egg on the aggressor, to unleash a war against the USSR.

Following the Munich deal, the policies of Western bourgeois-democratic regimes were put to a decisive test at the Anglo-French-Soviet talks in Moscow in the summer of 1939. The talks gave irrefutable proof that, notwithstanding the anti-appeasement stand of a certain section of influential bourgeois circles in Britain and France, their governments were not willing to reach an understanding with the Soviet Union on concrete steps to prevent fascist aggression in Europe. Reactionary ruling circles in Britain, France and the United States did not want, and their bourgeois-democratic regimes were not able, to repulse the aggressors and, acting jointly with the USSR, to deliver mankind from the threat of a new world war. It was explained not so much by the alleged weakness of their military and economic potential (as bourgeois falsifiers of history tend to assert) but by the class hatred of the imperialist circles who intended to finally turn the aggression against the Soviet Union.

In this situation, the USSR was compelled to accept Germany's proposal and, on August 23, 1939, the two countries signed a non-aggression treaty. The signing of the treaty

<sup>1</sup>At the conference in Munich (Germany) Britain and France, encouraged by the United States, forced the Czechoslovak government to turn over the Sudetenland to Germany in return for the latter's obligation to launch a war on the Soviet Union.

provided the Soviet Union a strategic advantage in time—22 months. It needed this time to strengthen its defences. The treaty halted the Germany military machine's push eastward. *Thus, the Soviet government was able to split the imperialist front.*

The signing of the treaty coincided with the rout of Japanese aggressors, who had violated the sovereignty of Mongolia, at the river Khalkhin-Gol. Also, the treaty prevented a joint German-Japanese attack on the Soviet Union, and brought about a serious change in Japanese militarists' strategic designs. The USSR thus eliminated the threat of aggression at two fronts. It laid the basis for an anti-Hitler coalition and the defeat of fascist-militarist bloc in World War II, and induced cardinal changes in the world situation in favour of the forces of revolution and socialism.

The class enemies of the working people would like to shift blame for the World War II onto the CPSU and the Comintern. They deliberately misrepresent the content and significance of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact. Such efforts are groundless. First, the treaty was bilateral and as such could not have caused a war. Secondly, prior to the signing of the pact, the USSR had for many years done all in its power to forestall the fascist aggression through a system of collective security. Thirdly, the war had been actually prepared by fascists and imperialists before the pact was signed. Britain, France and the United States had rejected all peace initiatives put forward by the Soviet Union. Moreover, the monopolists of these countries' were behind the Soviet Union's back trying to set up a common front with fascist Germany against the USSR.

The Soviet government and the CPSU were able to frustrate the anti-Soviet plan hatched by international imperialism. The Soviet Union eluded an assault by the joint forces of world imperialism. It was an impressive victory for the communist and international working-class movements and a clear defeat for their enemies.

The British, French and, particularly, US monopolies were responsible for the outbreak of the second world war. They had encouraged international fascism and Japanese militarism. The promises of "guarantees" by Britain and France raised in the Polish government unfounded hopes of receiving military aid from them. When Western allies declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, they did nothing to help Poland. They deserted Poland, as they had deserted Czechoslovakia, leaving its fate in the hands of Nazi hordes. In mid-October, Hitler signed a decree incorporating Polish western provinces into Germany. The Polish state had ceased to exist.



The Anglo-French forces waged a "phoney war"<sup>1</sup> on Germany's western borders. Britain and France persisted in their Munich policy of concessions to the aggressor. They made it clear that they were not opposed to satisfying the fascist countries' claims on the condition that this was at the expense of third countries, the Soviet Union in the first place. Following Poland's takeover, Hitler dealt with Scandinavia. On April 9, 1940, Denmark was overrun within 24 hours, at the beginning of May German troops occupied Norway, and on May 10 they began to press forward on the western front. Holland and Belgium were invaded. The Anglo-French forces retreated. There followed Hitler's breakthrough into France and its rapid fall. The capitulator clique, with Henri-Philippe Petain at the head, came into power in France. On June 22, 1940, it signed an armistice with Germany in Compiègne. Three-fifths of the country was occupied by German troops. The German Command had won its *Blitzkrieg* in Western Europe. Fascists set up governments of the Petain and Quisling type in occupied countries.<sup>2</sup>

*The International Communist Movement and  
CPSU—the Major Force of the Anti-Fascist  
Coalition of Nations*

World War II was one of the most difficult and complicated stages in the mass struggle. In these years, the international communist movement and proletariat acted as the major, the more consistent, vigorous and resolute anti-fascist force. Organising their countries for the struggle to prevent war, the communist parties were guided by a clear-cut programme worked out by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International. It envisaged an anti-fascist front, working-class unity both at the national and international levels, and unity of all anti-fascist, anti-imperialist, democratic and patriotic forces. A relevant condition for the attainment of these goals was concerted communist and social-democratic actions with Communists preserving independence of their class position. The rising anti-war movement constituted a serious obstacle to the aggression.

The development of the new tactics, however, was not without its share of doubts and errors. The Central Com-

mittee of the French Communist Party has admitted that an analysis of the party's policies in the initial months of the war reveals some grave mistakes on its part. The party at that time put forward the slogan of national unity. Its parliamentary faction voted in favour of war credits. Nothing was done to protect the party against the repressions, and the transfer of the party apparatus underground proceeded at a very slow pace. Searching for new tactics, in October 1939 the French Communist Party proclaimed the slogans of struggle against the threat of fascism in France and for peace and termination of the imperialist war. In early November 1939, the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) assessed the international situation and defined the tasks of the Communists in the war as follows: the war is "an unjust, reactionary, imperialist war. In this war the blame falls on all the capitalist governments, and primarily the ruling classes of the belligerent States." This definition, while it stressed the imperialist aspirations of the warring countries' monopoly capitalists, failed to take note of the national liberation tendency that had by that time already developed in World War II. An unfounded decision of the ECCI dissolved the Communist Party of Poland in 1938.

Some communist parties tried to oppose the imperialist "phoney war" by advancing only the programme of defence of the working people's immediate interests. They underestimated the effort for democracy and socialism, and the opposition of the reactionary groupings of the bourgeoisie who were reluctant to give the war a truly anti-fascist character. On November 25, 1939, the Central Committee of the British Communist Party stated that only the struggle for the workers' vital interests could promote the creation of a powerful movement of the British proletariat and that only such a movement could put an end to the imperialist war.

In their desire to prevent the widening of the military conflict, communist parties in neutral countries opposed their countries' joining in military actions in the period of the "phoney war". The Communist Party of the United States organised a mass anti-war movement and called upon the democratic forces to set up a new party—a peace party.

The popular front policy, worked out by the Marxist-Leninist parties, provided for a stable and close alliance of the proletariat, peasantry, all the working people. It opened up new possibilities for consolidating anti-fascist forces. Nevertheless, the progressive movements, whose vanguard was the working class, failed to organise a front of the anti-fascist, democratic, and anti-war forces capable of halting the increasing pressure of the forces of fascism and imperial-

<sup>1</sup>The "phoney war", a period of World War II characterised by inactivity of Anglo-French and German troops at the Western front lasting from September 1939 until May 1940, was a continuation of Munich, the policy of betrayal of small nations' interests and of turning the aggression against the USSR.

<sup>2</sup>The French General Petain and the leader of Norwegian fascists Quisling encouraged the German occupation of their countries and later headed puppet French and Norwegian governments respectively.

ist reaction. They did not succeed in putting a stop to the activities of warmongers. The implementation of strategic and tactical lines of the Comintern's Seventh Congress lagged behind the development of class struggles. Controlling key economic and military positions, imperialist reaction to a considerable degree influenced the course and outcome of class battles for its own purposes. The influence of Soviet socialist society and labour and anti-fascist movements on the world situation was growing. However, it had not yet reached the level necessary to forestall war. The communist parties' selfless struggle against fascism and war was unfolding in conditions of severe terror in capitalist countries. The labour movement in these countries had been weakened by splitting actions on the part of right-wing social-democratic leaders who had rejected the Communists' proposal for concerted actions. The national liberation movement had not yet developed to a sufficiently mass scale.

The war waged against Nazi Germany and its allies by the victims of aggression (Poland, Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania, China and others) was a *just war* from the beginning. As the aggression of the fascist-militarist bloc expanded, the liberating character of war on the part of its victims became increasingly evident. The growing struggle of the peoples against fascism and militarism exerted an increasing impact on the policies of the ruling classes in the capitalist countries that had entered the war against the fascist powers. In the face of the threat of fascist enslavement, they were compelled to give priority to efforts to prevent fascist occupation and to preserve their countries' independence rather than the implementation of their own imperialist aims. *The Soviet Union's entry into World War II sealed the process of its conversion from an imperialist into a just war for liberation* on the part of the countries fighting against the fascist states.

In the complex and difficult situation of the initial period of World War II, the CPSU and the Soviet people did all in their power to accelerate the development of the material and technological base of socialist society and the technological reequipping of its armed forces. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union did not have enough time to overtake the enemy in the production of the main items of war technology by the outbreak of military hostilities, since Nazi Germany drew upon the economic potential of the entire occupied Europe. The exacerbation of the general crisis of capitalism invigorated the revolutionary and progressive forces in most European countries. The long struggle of working people in Western Byelorussia, Western Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Bessarabia, and Northern Bukovina for restoration

of Soviet government and unification with the peoples of the Soviet Union, ended with the victory of the socialist revolution. Their struggle had been led by the proletariat guided by communist parties.

Trampling upon the non-aggression treaty, Nazi Germany attacked the USSR on June 22, 1941. On December 7, 1941, war began in the Far East and the Pacific. With the attack on Pearl Harbour Japan opened hostilities against the United States and Britain. Four days later, Germany and Italy also declared war on the United States. With the Japanese aggression against China going on for several years, *the war now had spread over the whole world.*

In launching their attack upon the Soviet Union, the German aggressors were confident of victory, since in Europe they were joined by Italy, Finland, Hungary and Romania. Moreover, in the Far East Germany had an ally in Japan, maintaining a strong army on the Soviet borders. The Soviet Union was in mortal danger.

However, Germany's calculations of a *blitzkrieg* victory over the USSR fell through. The Soviet people were able to protect and strengthen the first socialist state. The rout of Nazi Germany and, later, militarist Japan was achieved through joint actions by the anti-fascist coalition. Still, in all due respect for the efforts of other members of the coalition, we must nevertheless stress the special role played by the Soviet people and Soviet army, who were able to change the course of World War II and made the major contribution to bringing about the defeat of Nazi Germany and its allies. As is well known, the second front in Europe was opened only in early June 1944, 3 years after Germany's attack upon the USSR.

The political strategy of monopoly capital in World War II was formulated with utter clarity by US Senator (later President of the United States) Harry Truman. Two days after Germany attacked the USSR he said: "If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible."<sup>1</sup> It is a fact that up until mid-1944 from 153 to 201 German divisions were active on the Soviet front. At that time, United States and British troops were only engaging 2 to 21 divisions. The war demonstrated that the socialist system was greatly superior to capitalism.

The CPSU in the years of the war became a truly fighting party. First, it ensured concerted political, administrative, and economic management of the country in all spheres of life. Secondly, it dispatched its own best forces to the front. The call "Communists—forward!" was heard at the most dif-

<sup>1</sup> *The New York Times*, June 24, 1941.



ficult sections of the front where the situation required special courage and heroism. By early 1945, the number of Communists in the armed forces constituted 3,325,000 or 60 per cent of the Party membership. Of the number of persons awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, 74 per cent were Communists and 20 per cent Komsomols. Thirdly, at the rear the Communist Party was the organiser of military production. The Party put forward the slogan: "Everything for the front, everything for victory". The working class gave wholehearted support to this call. It expressed the meaning of life for the entire Soviet people.

The Party suffered tremendous losses in the war years: 3 million Communists gave their lives in the fighting. Nevertheless, at the end of the war the Party was larger than at the beginning.

Party ranks were joined by the best people in the service and civilian workers. During the war, 5.3 million men and women became candidates for Party membership and 3.6 million joined the Party. By January 1, 1946, the CPSU membership exceeded 5.5 million people, a 50 per cent increase over the pre-war period.

The CPSU brought together all classes and social groups, all big and small nationalities into a single powerful force capable of routing the enemy. Consequently, the Party's authority and role in the life of Soviet society grew immensely. So did its role on the international scene and its authority in the international communist movement. The Soviet Union's victory consolidated the principal base of the world revolutionary process. The Soviet people's just struggle joined with the struggle waged by other nations in a single powerful movement and stimulated an upsurge in the world revolutionary movement.

## *2. Resistance Movement in the Occupied Countries and Within the Fascist Bloc*

In extremely difficult conditions, communist parties acted as organisers of the anti-fascist Resistance in occupied countries and within the fascist states, Germany and Italy, above all. Indeed, Communists were the first, and for a long time the only organised political force leading a real struggle against fascism, against the invaders.

### *The Tactics of Communist and Workers' Parties of Occupied Countries*

The communist and workers' parties of fascist-occupied countries—Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania, Czechoslovakia,

Poland, France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Norway—waged a bitter struggle against fascist enslavement.

The anti-fascist liberation struggle of the people of occupied countries took the form of the Resistance movement. It formed part of the great battle waged by all progressive forces with the USSR at the head, against fascism and imperialist aggression.

With its anti-fascist and general democratic socio-political content, Resistance had a great impact on the character, course and outcome of war and significantly helped victory of the anti-fascist coalition. The decisive role of the working masses and their increasing influence upon the course of history found its most vivid expression in Resistance. Altogether, the countries of occupied and dependent Europe sent over 3 million fighters to the battle fields in 1945.

Resistance was rooted in the preceding struggle against fascism and the war threat. This struggle continued in the new conditions of war and fascist enslavement. Resistance embraced various classes and social strata of the population including industrial workers, peasants, patriotically-minded groups of urban small-scale and middle bourgeoisie, intellectuals, members of the armed forces, and civil servants. The major driving force of the anti-fascist struggle was the working class.

The anti-fascist struggle involved not only Communists but representatives of bourgeois parties as well. Nearly everywhere, two basic trends could be discerned: the bourgeois and the popular democratic. This is explained by the split within the bourgeoisie and particularly by the stand of the upper strata of the exploiting classes—the big bourgeoisie and landlords—who had betrayed national interests by actively collaborating with fascist invaders and as a result had lost the trust of the popular masses.

Resistance was multinational. The Yugoslav Resistance, for example, included 63 special international and national formations made up of people of many countries. Some 40,000 Soviet men and women were involved in the liberation struggle of the European peoples. Many foreign anti-fascists joined Soviet guerrilla units.

Participating in Resistance, Communists sought:

(1) to draw in the working class, the major social force capable of ensuring progressive and democratic development of this movement;

(2) to establish unity in action of workers regardless of their political views and, whenever possible, to organise the unity of all labour parties and organisations; in many cases, the goal was organic unity of the working-class political parties;

(3) to achieve unity of all patriotic forces, their unification into a national front of struggle against fascism;

(4) to attain cooperation of all existing Resistance organisations, regardless of their political trend, in the common struggle for national liberation of Hitler-enslaved countries.

It is clear that this line was a continuation in the changed conditions of the concept of a united anti-fascist front advanced by the Seventh Congress of the Comintern. This line of the communist parties ensured the movement's success, made it capable of playing a major role in the liberation of the respective countries.

The movement's principal organisational forms were national liberation anti-fascist fronts set up upon the initiative of communist parties in France, Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Norway. They involved various political parties and organisations: communist, social-democratic, christian democratic and also bourgeois radical and liberal parties as well as trade unions, youth, women's, sports and other public organisations supporting the liberation struggle. Cooperation of Communists and Social Democrats was of major significance for the struggle waged by the working class and all anti-fascist forces. Protection of national independence and workers' vital interests and the opposition to fascism and reaction formed the basis of this cooperation. In France, Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries, Communists and Social Democrats rendered each other active support in underground work.

The communist parties worked out programmes for anti-fascist fronts comprising: routing of fascists and their henchmen, reestablishment of national sovereignty, punishment of fascist criminals and traitors, nationalisation of their property, broad democratisation of state and public institutions, reinstatement and extension of democratic rights and freedoms, and adoption of democratic agrarian reforms. This programme ensured the working-class hegemony in the liberation struggle. Thus, the goals of anti-fascist, national liberation and democratic movements were closely linked to the perspectives of the emancipation of the working people.

Communists waged a ceaseless struggle against the efforts of some bourgeois circles to preserve their own influence upon the masses. These sections of the bourgeoisie rejected active forms of struggle against fascists, urged the people to be "careful", pursued the policy of restricting the struggle against the invaders to the minimum while preserving their forces for a future struggle for power.

Resistance had a multitude of forms of action, including anti-fascist propaganda and agitation, issuance and dis-

semination of underground literature, strikes, sabotage at the enterprises turning out products for the occupational forces and at transport, help to war prisoners and workers at fascist labour camps, and physical extermination of traitors and invaders. Its principal form was the armed struggle by regular and para-military liberation armies and nationwide and local uprisings and subversive activities. Communists had to overcome the opposition of leaders of right bourgeois organisations and forces within the movement who regarded armed struggle "premature" and "dangerous". As the class struggle sharpened, the guerrilla movement acquired an increasingly mass character, becoming a serious force in the struggle against the invaders. Guerrilla forces engaged a considerable number of divisions which the invaders would have otherwise use on the main fronts.

As a rule, the armed struggle against the invaders passed through several stages, from actions by separate combat units and groups, which gradually gained numerical strength and power, to the formation of guerrilla armies.

Towards the end of 1941, a special brigade and some 50 guerrilla units were formed in Yugoslavia. In time, they grew into divisions and corps, and the country's armed forces were named the Popular Liberation Army of Yugoslavia.

Guerrilla units were active in Czechoslovakia in the spring and summer of 1944. August 1944 witnessed the Slovak National uprising and May 1945—the uprising in Prague. In Poland, the struggle against German invaders was waged first by small guerrilla units whose nucleus was formed by workers. The anti-fascist movement was then joined by the People's Guard created on the initiative of the Polish Workers' Party, later transformed into the People's Army. In October 1941, a Resistance center was set up in Greece, later transformed into the Central Committee of the Popular Liberation Army. In the summer of 1943, Albanian Communists in guerrilla units organised the National Liberation Army. Political consolidation of the French Resistance resulted, in early 1944, in the creation of internal armed forces in which guerrillas led by Communists were the most active and militant force.

*Policy of Communists in the Countries of the  
Fascist Bloc*

In the countries comprising the fascist bloc—Germany, Italy, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Japan, Finland—the conditions of struggle were particularly difficult. These were conditions of terroristic dictatorship, and communist parties had to work in deep underground. Employing wide-



scale social demagoguery combined with nationalism and chauvinism, fascists were able to maintain ideological influence over significant sections of the population. Fascist terrorism and propaganda impeded the entry of the masses into the struggle. Prior to the war some 350,000 active anti-fascists were thrown into prisons and concentration camps in Germany. Thus, a mass anti-fascist movement could not emerge in the main countries of the fascist bloc.

It was difficult for the communist parties to maintain centralised organisation. Yet in spite of all difficulties and obstacles, communist parties were able, by various methods and means of struggle, to rally democratic, anti-fascist forces and to achieve unity between Communists and Socialists. Acting jointly with other anti-fascists, Social Democrats in the first place, the Communist Party of Germany established a fairly extensive network of Resistance groups. The biggest were the Schulze-Boysen, Uhrig, Lechleiter, Neubauer and Schumann groups. The Saefkow group was one of the most active throughout 1942-1944. Its influence extended over most underground organisations in Berlin and other German cities. The group established ties with some leaders of the social-democratic underground and bourgeois opposition. The activities of the Anti-Fascist German People's Front, another major Resistance group, covered mainly South Germany. The Front had links with Soviet POWs, who were detected and killed by the Gestapo as they prepared an armed uprising. Communists exposed the essence of fascism and its crimes, showing the people that their most bitter enemy was within the country. Communist parties advanced the slogan of defeat for "our own" governments and called upon the people to fight for the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship. They revived party organisations, set up underground groups, and issued illegal newspapers and leaflets. Anti-fascists employed various means to sabotage war production, munitions transportation and the orders issued by fascist authorities. They organised broad democratic and anti-fascist fronts, such as the Free Germany National Committee, the Hungarian Front, the Bulgarian National Front and the Romanian Patriotic Front. From 1941 to 1944, 1,303 labour conflicts involving a total of 53,000 people occurred in Japan. In 1942-1943 the biggest demonstrations of workers of major Japanese enterprises were led by Communists.

In all these countries, Communists were organisers of armed struggle. Guerrilla units sprang up in Bulgaria as early as 1941. The guerrilla movement in Italy acquired a sweeping scale. The first Committees of National Liberation emerged there in the autumn of 1942; later representatives of the Christian Democratic and Liberal parties joined the

Communists and Socialists in these committees. Here, the Communists were able to maintain a permanent organisation closely linked with the industrial proletariat. They sought cooperation with Socialists within the framework of the Comitato di liberazioni nazionale per l'Alta Italia (1941) and later in the Comitato di liberazioni nazionale set up in 1943.<sup>1</sup> Concerted actions by Communists and Socialists helped make the working class the leading force of the anti-fascist movement. In the spring of 1945, the Italian Communist Party called upon the people to launch a nationwide armed uprising, which resulted in the liberation of northern Italy from fascists.

In Greece, Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Norway, the correlation of forces that took place during the last stage of war was such that people led by the proletariat could achieve victory over the internal reactionaries and gain far-reaching social reforms. However, the reactionaries were supported by US and British imperialists. Relying on British and US troops and aided by right Socialists and the church hierarchy, they were able to maintain their class domination. By November 1944, the Greek people led by the Communist Party had routed the German troops and liberated Greece. US and British imperialists feared that they would not be able to use Greece as a springboard for a struggle against the Balkan nations and the Soviet Union. British troops occupied Greece, prevented the Greek people from utilising the fruits of their own victory, and reinstated the reactionary order there.

British and US imperialists blocked democratic changes in Italy. The British and US military authorities returned to the former quisling owners enterprises which had been put under the workers' control. They dissolved the Liberation Committee of Northern Italy which was acting as the Provisional Government. They also dissolved local national liberation committees functioning as popular power bodies. They set about dismissing guerrilla police and forcing patriots out of government bodies.

Although the French Communist Party was represented in post-war governments, the people were not able fully to use the outcome of war to their own advantage.

*Growth of Anti-Fascist, Anti-Imperialist Liberation Struggle Into Popular Revolutions*

At the concluding stages of the war, a revolutionary situa-

<sup>1</sup>Roberto Battaglia, *The Story of the Italian Resistance*, London, 1957, p. 21.

tion developed and internal contradictions sharpened in a number of countries, thus creating the objective material, socio-economic, prerequisites for the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist and democratic struggle to grow into popular revolutions. The revolutions unfolded in the favourable international situation created by Soviet victories at the German front. This struggle acquired the most sweeping character in Central and South-Eastern Europe. Resistance movement in Central and South-East European countries coordinated their activities with offensive operations of Soviet Armed Forces. Two Polish armies, a Czechoslovak corps, Yugoslav, Greek and Albanian People's Liberation armies, Romanian and Bulgarian divisions formed after the rout of the fascists, fought together with the Soviet forces against the invaders.

The development of popular revolutions was promoted by flexible policies of communist and workers' parties, combining the fight for national liberation with the struggle for democracy and social progress of their peoples.

National liberation and patriotic fronts uniting the patriots set up new, revolutionary bodies of power in areas liberated from occupation. The bulk of the forces of internal reaction, which had collaborated with fascist invaders and fought together with them against guerrilla national liberation armies, had been defeated in the course of war. The anti-fascist struggle against the invaders merged with the civil war against reactionaries.<sup>1</sup>

As a rule, the transition from a national liberation struggle to a popular revolution occurred in the course of victorious uprisings against fascist invaders and reactionary forces. In Romania, the Antonescu fascist dictatorship was overthrown on August 23, 1944. The struggle against the monarchic-fascist clique in Bulgaria acquired a particularly mass character. The September 9, 1944 armed uprising placed power in the hands of the working class which then formed the government of National Front. A socialist revolution was achieved in Bulgaria and dictatorship of the proletariat established. The Romanian and Bulgarian governments declared war on Nazi Germany. Their armies contributed to the routing of the fascist hordes. The August 1944 uprising in Slovakia ushered in a national democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia. The revolution restored the country's national sovereignty and transferred power into the hands of democratic forces led by the working class.

In 1942 the Anti-Fascist Veche of Popular Resistance was formed in Yugoslavia in the course of the national libera-

tion war. It rallied the patriotic forces around a common platform of struggle against the traitors and invaders. When Yugoslavia was liberated in the spring of 1945 with the aid of Soviet and Bulgarian armies, the people took power. The National Liberation Army of Albania had driven the invaders and their henchmen out of the country by the end of November 1944, after the Soviet Army entered the Balkans.

The revolutionary power emerging in the form of national committees after the rout of invaders and their henchmen, had succeeded in overcoming the resistance of the reactionaries and implementing the programmes of the national fronts. They restored the countries' national sovereignty and conducted far-reaching democratic changes. Democratic forces led by the working class formed national front governments with communist participation, and laid the foundations of a national democratic system in Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Albania.

### *3. Communists and the Working Class Lead the Anti-Fascist Struggle in the Capitalist Countries of the Anti-Fascist Coalition*

*The Tactics of Communist and Workers' Parties in  
The Countries of the Anti-Hitler Coalition*

Communist parties and the working class in Britain, Australia, the United States and other members of the anti-Hitler coalition concentrated their efforts on mobilising all the human and material resources to defeat the fascist aggressors, give maximum aid to the Soviet Union and strengthen in every way the anti-fascist coalition which emerged in the summer of 1941 with the USSR, United States and Britain at the head. They did all in their power to consolidate the armed forces and increase their contribution to the routing of fascism and militarism. Many thousands of Communists fought bravely at the fronts and many were distinguished by government awards.

Communists worked hard to increase military production. They led the working people's campaign for increasing war production and aid to the USSR. Their "battle for production" acquired objective socio-political significance. At the same time, they organised a persistent struggle for the rights and interests of the working people. Demanding that all resources should be employed to defeat fascism, communist parties and progressive forces of the anti-Hitler coalition struggled vigorously to reduce the war profits of the monopolies.

<sup>1</sup>L.S. Yagodovsky, *Popular Front in European Socialist Countries*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 31-32 (in Russian).



Communists exposed the egoistic class character of the anti-Soviet plans and actions of monopolistic circles in Britain and the United States which impeded the routing of Hitler Germany and complete liberation of nations; they shed light on monopolies' tactics of prolongation of the war, sabotage of military deliveries to the Soviet Union and delays in the opening of the second front in Europe. Imperialists hoped that in the course of war they would be able to weaken the USSR as greatly as possible and achieve undivided world supremacy. Encouraging the working masses to the struggle against reactionaries, Communists organised mass meetings and demonstrations, conducted vigorous political work among the masses, organised collection of money and medicine to help the Soviet and other warring peoples. The campaign of North American workers for speeding up lendlease military and food deliveries to the Soviet Union acquired a massive scale. The movement for a second front in Europe acquired a massive character. Expressing the will of the working class and all working people, Communists declared that victory hinged "upon the opening of a two-front war against the central concentration of Axis power on the continent of Europe".<sup>1</sup> Communist activities prevented the reactionary circles in Britain and the United States from weakening the anti-fascist coalition and attaining a secret agreement with Hitler Germany aimed against the Soviet Union.

Communists raised the class consciousness of the working people, strengthened the unity of the working and all democratic forces and overcame revisionist influences and sectarianism in their own ranks. Thus, the British Communists were active in supporting the committees composed of trade-union and business representatives, and worked to increase war production. The British Communist Party succeeded in establishing firm ties with the Labour Party. The latter was represented in the government and, to some extent, influenced the policies of the Churchill Cabinet. The support of the Labour Party to the Communists' and workers' efforts for increasing military production in 1942-1943 resulted in united action with many Labour Party organisations. At the same time, Labour leaders continued to reject all proposals advanced by Communists to attain unity of action for the opening of a second front in Europe.

Reformists used the war and anti-fascist cooperation to undermine the Marxist doctrine on class struggle, to disseminate their own concepts of class peace, and strengthen their influence over the working class. Many trade unions in the

countries of the anti-Hitler coalition called upon the workers to abstain from strikes that could reduce military production and thus play into the hands of the military fascist bloc. The communist parties supported this position. This, however, did not mean the end of class struggle. From December 1941 to August 1945, 14,000 strikes involving a total of 6.7 million workers took place in the United States.

Reformist leaders, however, used the trade unions' anti-fascist cooperation with governments to reject all forms of class struggle, under the pretext that the class struggle could weaken the anti-fascist coalition. This policy played into the hands of imperialists, who sought to shift the burden of the war onto the shoulders of the working masses.

Meanwhile, the reformist propaganda of community of monopolies' and working-class interests in the war led to the spreading of revisionist and liquidationist tendencies within some communist parties. This was forcefully revealed in the US Communist Party. Its wartime General Secretary, Earl Browder, sought to theoretically prove the need for the dissolution of the Communist Party. Basing himself on the concept of "organised capitalism" and the theory of "exceptionalism" of US capitalism, Browder alleged that US capitalism was most "advanced in the world" and thus made possible "regulation and limitation of monopoly capital". Moreover, he made it appear as if the US was moving towards "integration" into the democratic camp of "reasonable" and "far-sighted" capitalists. The Browder revisionist group, calling for unlimited national unity, a "new course" in the Party policy, and "harmony" between socialism and capitalism, caused great harm to the Communist Party of the USA and international communist movement. At the 1944 Party Convention, the group, who had rejected the struggle for socialism, succeeded in bringing about the Party's dissolution under the pretext of reorganisation into a non-party American Communist Political Association. Rank and file Communists and many Party leaders, however, demanded that the Party be restored, and continued their activity. They exposed the revisionist outlook and anti-Party activities of the renegades, and restored the Communist Party at the extraordinary convention in July 1945.

Communists of some other capitalist countries of the anti-Hitler coalition also had to withstand the efforts of reactionary forces to curtail the activities of communist parties and other progressive organisations. This was particularly the case with many Caribbean and Latin American countries. Although their governments had declared war against the fascist militarist bloc, they continued their repressions against Communists

<sup>1</sup>Joseph North, *Robert Minor. Artist and Crusader. An Informal Biography*, International Publishers, New York, 1956, p. 251.

and anti-fascist organisations. Moreover, they did not actively oppose the internal fascist groups.

*Democratic and Anti-Fascist Movement in Latin American and Caribbean Countries*

Here the movement developed in a complicated and contradictory socio-economic and political situation. These countries, aside from the small-scale expeditionary forces sent by Brazil and Mexico, took no direct part in the war. Nevertheless, they had to submit their economic and other resources to the needs of the war.

Patriotic and democratic forces of Latin American and Caribbean countries were strengthened and consolidated in the course of the anti-fascist struggle and movement of solidarity with the Soviet people. The development of industries resulted in their greater influence upon the socio-political situation of the national bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the proletariat, on the other. As its ranks grew and it became more consolidated and organised, the proletariat was able to influence to a greater degree the political situation in the Latin American and Caribbean states as well as those progressive forces which were becoming increasingly opposed to foreign monopolies and the local bourgeois-landlord oligarchy. Peasant masses became more active. In some countries peasants set up their own associations and established ties with working-class organisations. Student democratic organisations developed into an impressive and independent force. Urban middle-class strata were involved in political movements on a greater scale. Defeats suffered by the fascist-militarist bloc stimulated the revolutionary enthusiasm among Latin American peoples and strengthened their solidarity with the nations fighting against the fascist bloc as well as their confidence in achieving victory over the bourgeois-landlord oligarchy.

Tyrannical Latin American regimes were falling under the onslaught of democratic movements in the years of World War II. Popular masses were increasingly more successful in their struggle for their immediate goals. This also took place in countries where the masses had not yet accumulated necessary political experience. In the second half of 1943, strikes and demonstrations began in Brazil, which undermined the reactionary "new state". In Bolivia, the growth of political activity of the working people found expression in the setting up of two democratic parties: the Left Revolutionary Party (PRI) in July 1940 (reflecting the interests of democratic intelligentsia, urban petty-bourgeois strata and, partly, proletariat) and the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) in January 1941 involving mainly represen-

tatives of small-scale and emerging middle bourgeoisie.<sup>1</sup> They played a significant role in the post-war political struggles. The PRI's cooperation with right-wing parties and its refusal, after the government's fall in 1946, to take power in the country on the pretext that North American imperialism would not allow it to govern the country and would in a very short time stage a coup d'état, undermined its influence upon the masses and caused exacerbation of inner-party contradictions and the party's de facto dissolution. Some of its members then joined the MNR. The other, the more progressive and advanced PRI group, joined the Bolivian Communist Party.

The Bolivian Communist Party was organised in January 1950 through unification of separate communist groups engaged in the study of Marxism and advanced representatives of the working class and young people who had earlier been close to the Left Revolutionary Party. In April 1952, the Bolivian Communist Party took an active part in the popular uprising which ushered in an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal bourgeois-democratic revolution.

In a number of Latin American states, popular uprisings took place in 1944-1946. In May 1944, the bloody dictatorship in El Salvador fell. This made it possible for workers to set up trade unions. At the same time a mass armed uprising occurred in Ecuador. The masses supported the army, which had overthrown the pro-imperialist bourgeois-landlord dictatorship. Representatives of the Communist and Socialist parties joined the government.

Substantial successes were scored by the democratic forces in Guatemala, where on October 20, 1944 an armed uprising put an end to the tyrannical regime and ushered in the Guatemala Revolution of 1944-1954. This was the first bourgeois-democratic revolution in the history of Guatemala. Democratisation of the socio-political system proceeded more quickly after the adoption, in March 1945, of a constitution proclaiming bourgeois-democratic freedoms, stipulating the institution of an agrarian reform on the basis of elimination of latifundism, and providing social and civil rights for the working people. All political parties were permitted to exist, and shortly later communist groups were also allowed to exist as a result of the working people's pressure on the government.

Patriotic forces advocating democratisation of the state system, the provision of democratic freedoms and civil rights, economic independence, and the establishment of diplomatic

<sup>1</sup>The MNR was organised through the efforts of a group of intellectuals headed by Victor Paz Estenssoro, Carlos Montenegro and Hernan Siles Zuazo, the latter joining the MNR leadership in 1964, following a lengthy period of struggle within the Party.



ties with the Soviet Union, were becoming stronger in Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Chile. The working class in Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Paraguay and Uruguay succeeded in instituting law on minimum wages. The Colombian proletariat was the major force disrupting the attempted reactionary coup by the bourgeois-landlord oligarchy and the Catholic church leadership. During the war, anti-fascist democratic forces in Chile, Mexico and other Latin American states that had preserved bourgeois-democratic institutions, exerted a strong influence upon government policies.

Communist parties of the Latin American and Caribbean countries regarded the fight against fascism as the particularly important task of the anti-imperialist movement. They advocated consolidation of the anti-fascist patriotic forces into broad anti-imperialist democratic coalitions capable of withstanding the national bourgeois-landlord oligarchy and imperialism and of organising successful struggle for the basic socio-economic changes. Common to all of them was their leading role in the popular opposition to fascism, foreign monopoly capital, and local tyrannical and dictatorial regimes. They also guided the proletariat's and working people's struggle for improving their material conditions and expanding democratic rights and freedoms. By helping raw-material and food deliveries to the countries of anti-Hitler coalition, Latin American Communists made their own contribution to the "battle for production" conducted by the working people in these countries. At the same time, they supported their governments' war efforts and demanded more effective participation by their states in the activities directed against the fascist bloc and for the immediate opening of the second front in Europe.

The struggle for the creation of broad anti-fascist and democratic coalitions on the strategic and tactical principles described earlier, helped communist parties in Latin American and Caribbean states to extend their ties with proletariat and other strata, to consolidate organisationally and ideologically, and to strengthen themselves numerically. By the beginning of the war, the total number of Communists in this region was about 90,000. In 1947, it exceeded 380,000.<sup>1</sup>

In 1939, the party of Nicaraguan Communists called the Nicaraguan Socialist Party emerged as a result of the unification of a number of Marxist groups and circles. Its formation, however, was proclaimed only in 1944, when there appeared conditions favourable for developing political activity. In

1944, the party of Dominican Communists was set up. It was formed, under the name Dominican Popular Socialist Party, as a result of the merger of several Marxist groups embracing students and intellectuals. Dominican Communists became really active in 1946 when they stepped up their work among the industrial and agricultural proletariat.

Combining the struggle for political independence of the working class with the movement for unity of anti-fascist patriotic forces, communist parties in several countries were able to achieve liberalisation of political regimes and some significant socio-economic reforms favourable to the working people. Many communist parties (in Costa Rica, Cuba, Paraguay, Chile and the communist parties that had recently gained legal status—in Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia and Peru) developed into an impressive national political force. Communists of Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Peru, Chile, and Ecuador were either already represented in their respective parliaments or won seats in parliaments and municipal councils during the very first post-war elections. Despite the disintegration of the Popular Front, the Communist Party of Chile won a significant victory and gained 15 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 3 seats in the Senate in the March 1941 congressional elections. Communists were represented in the government in Cuba (1943-1944), Ecuador (1944-1946), and Chile (1946-1947).

In Argentina, the pro-fascist regime established in 1943 began to crack by the end of the war. In September that year, major strike battles occurred at the slaughter houses in the industrial areas of Buenos Aires. In June 1944, an extensive anti-fascist organisation, Patria Libre, emerged. Late that year, the intensification of the anti-fascist and democratic movements and of the class struggle led to a merger of independent trade unions into the Trade Union Federation which worked for democratisation of trade unions. However, already in the war years the Communists' struggle for a national democratic front was to a considerable extent complicated by Peronism, the bourgeois-nationalistic trend in the class struggle which even now remains the CPA's ideological enemy and an obstacle to working-class unity. Anti-fascist and democratic forces were uniting and becoming stronger in Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Panama, Peru, El Salvador, Uruguay, Chile and Ecuador. They were led by Marxist-Leninist parties.

Latin American Communists would have been more successful in their efforts to unite anti-fascist and democratic forces were it not for Browderism, whose influence had extended to some Latin American communist parties. The Second National Conference of the Brazilian Communist

<sup>1</sup> *Latin America. Encyclopedic Reference Book* (in two volumes). Vol. 1, Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya Publishers, Moscow, 1979, p. 95.

Party (August 1943) rejected the liquidationist demand that all illegal organisations be dissolved—allegedly in the interests of “national unity” in the struggle against fascism. The First Congress of the Venezuelan Communist Party, in November 1946, overcame the split caused by the Browderist policy of revising Marxism which had been approved and adopted by the Party since 1943. Browderism caused great harm to the Communist Party of Colombia which, under its influence, was renamed the Socialist Democratic Party (Second Congress, August 1944) and extended its membership to all those who had voted for Communists at preceding general elections. The Fifth Party Congress, in July 1947, excluded the right-revisionist Duran group from the ranks of the Communist Party of Colombia. It took the Mexican Communist Party a long time to overcome the erroneous political and organisational line of the Ninth (March 1944) Party Congress which proclaimed a progressive character of US capitalism and the Mexican bourgeoisie's ability to lead the liberation movement. In the 1940s, this line impeded the Mexican Communists' efforts for political independence of the working-class movement.

Beginning with its 13th Congress (March 1940), the work of the Communist Party of Uruguay was complicated by the internal struggle and emergence, within its ranks, of the right-wing trend—Browderism. This reflected the social-democratic, reformist line which sought to conceal under vague definitions the objectives of the revolution. The Party also suffered as a result of the personality cult of the then General Secretary of the PSU National Committee Eugenio Gomez. In later years, this line led to grave mistakes, a crisis within the Party (in 1955), and expulsion from the Party of Eugenio Gomez and Eugenio Gomez Chiribao, organisational secretary of the Executive Committee. Thus, the communist parties of Latin America were able to preserve the unity of their ranks by relying on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

Despite numerous difficulties, communist parties in the capitalist countries of the anti-fascist coalition gained impressive successes in building a mass anti-fascist movement. They made a tangible contribution to bringing about the total capitulation of fascist states and militarist Japan.

#### *4. Communists and the Rise of National Liberation Movements in the Colonies and Semicolonies*

The anti-fascist and liberation character of World War II inspired the peoples of most colonies and semicolonies to

the struggle against the common enemy—fascism in Europe and Japanese militarism. The Armed Forces of the British Empire included 2,064,000 officers and men from India, 198,000 from the Union of South Africa, 549,000 from South Rhodesia and other colonies. By July 1944, Africans constituted approximately two-thirds of the French Armed Forces. Some 100,000 Filipinos, or two-thirds of the total number of troops engaged in the region, defended the Philippines. The national liberation movement constituted a part of the world anti-fascist movement.

Communists and other progressive forces had to wage political and ideological struggles against nationalistic tendencies. Pursuing imperialist goals, countries of the fascist bloc skilfully used the just resentment of the colonial peoples against British, French, Dutch and other colonialists, to undermine the participation of these peoples in the war on the side of the anti-fascist coalition. Japanese militarists were especially sophisticated in playing upon the colonial peoples' national sentiments. However, their attempts to rely upon the peoples of occupied colonies and dependencies fell through. The oppressed peoples of the East had no desire to exchange one type of colonial slavery for another. Protests also increased among the African peoples. It found expression in the Declaration to the Colonial Peoples adopted at the Fifth Pan-African Congress in October 1945. It stated: “We affirm the right of all colonial peoples to control their own destiny. All colonies must be free from foreign imperialist control, whether political or economic.”<sup>1</sup>

The liberation struggle in the colonies of the powers of anti-Hitler coalition was of specific nature in that it was directed towards two goals: defeat of the fascist-militarist bloc and freedom from colonial oppression. As a result, Syria and the Lebanon achieved independence in the course of the war at the end of 1943; Indonesia and Vietnam—in August and September 1945, respectively. British, US, French and Dutch imperialists were alarmed at the invigoration of the national liberation movement and tried by all means to impede the colonial peoples' struggle to defend their countries from fascist aggressors. In China, Korea, Burma, Indochina, Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines the imperialists tried to prevent the formation of people's liberation armies and guerrilla units under the leadership of the working class and communist parties of these countries. The progressive forces had to overcome stiff resistance offered by colonial powers and their local satellites, who feared the

<sup>1</sup>Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism. A Short Political Guide*, Pall Mall Press, London-Dunmow, 1962, p. 137.



anti-fascist struggle even more than Japanese aggression.

However, the colonialists were unable to prevent the growing consolidation of the forces of national liberation. Broad national fronts were formed in colonial and dependent countries: the Anti-Japanese united fronts in China and in the Philippines, the Viet-Minh National Front in Indochina, the National Liberation League in Korea and the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League in Burma. The proletariat, peasantry, national bourgeoisie and all patriotic forces constituted the major forces of the anti-fascist and anti-imperialist struggle. Over the war years, the working class had become noticeably stronger in colonial and dependent countries. Notably, from 1939 to 1945 the working-class population increased from 1,751,000 to 2,643,000 in India and from 273,000 to 362,000 in Egypt.

In a number of Asian countries—China, Korea, Indochina and the Philippines—the working class and its vanguard, the communist parties, led the struggle. Communist Parties emerged in Burma, Iran and Ceylon. Their influence became stronger. In China, the Communist Party was following the policy of united anti-Japanese front developed on the initiative and with the aid of the Comintern before the war. Consistent implementation of this line encountered serious difficulties stemming from the acute strife within the Party. In Korea, Communist groups and organisations within guerrilla movements had a strong influence upon the people. In the course of the anti-imperialist struggle, the leadership of the Communist Party of Korea was formed. The Communist Party of Indochina organised the liberation struggle against the Japanese invaders. It set up self-defence units of the population, and organised and trained armed regiments of revolutionary forces which later formed the Liberation Army of Vietnam. The Party displayed flexibility in combining the political and ideological activity with armed struggle.

The peoples of China, Korea, Indochina, Malaya, Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines waged a successful armed struggle against the Japanese aggressors who had established the regime of bloody oppression in the occupied countries. The Chinese people amassed great experience in the struggle. Areas were liberated and fortified, bases for guerrilla actions created, and the policy of unification of all nationalities and patriotic forces was implemented. The Chinese people scored cardinal successes in the struggle against the Japanese imperialists with the aid of the Soviet Armed Forces which had routed Japan's major Armed Force—the Kwantung Army. However, while the section of the CPC leadership relying on the support of the Comintern maintained the cor-

rect position of implementing the tactical line of united anti-Japanese actions, its left-sectarian tendency impeded the CPC policy of the united front. In the areas where the CPC troops were based, the Mao Zedong group conducted policies contravening the CPC-Kuomintang agreement on cooperation in the war against Japan. During the stage of war most difficult for the Soviet Union, when German troops were advancing on Leningrad, Moscow and Stalingrad and when the security of the country's Far Eastern borders was of immense importance, the CPC was overcome by the "rectification of the style" campaign directed by Mao Zedong, and the CPC leadership rejected active armed struggle.

During World War II, the communist parties and national democratic forces of African and Asian countries concentrated their efforts not only on a resolute struggle against the fascist invaders but also on elimination of all types of colonial oppression, achievement of national independence and profound democratic reforms. The national liberation struggle undermined the domination of imperialism and deepened the general crisis of capitalism and the capitalist colonial system.

When Germany attacked the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of India called for extending the movement for independence simultaneously with turning the struggle against the fascist-militarist bloc into a national war, and for support of Britain's war efforts. The national liberation struggle of 1943-1945 led to the intensification of peasant protests and strikes in which economic and political demands were combined. The Communist Party played an increasingly important part in the organisation of these movements. Its numerical strength increased from 4,000 in 1942 to 30,000 in 1945. The Communists' influence became stronger in the organisations they led: the All-India Trade Union Congress, the Peasant Union and the Volunteers Unit. By the time serious battles with the British colonialists began, the organised revolutionary movement of India had become an impressive political force.

In Africa, the participation of popular masses in the armed struggle against fascism and militarism elevated the level of national consciousness and of the organisation and class awareness of the African proletariat. It laid the ground for the future invigoration of the national liberation movement. In 1939-1945, the people of South Africa became more active and the labour movement stronger. Important steps were taken towards consolidation of the forces of national liberation and the working class. The Communist Party of South Africa assessed the character of World War II on the basis of proletarian internationalism. When Germany attacked the

Soviet Union, the South African Communists stressed that the major battles were those waged by the Soviet people against fascist invaders and that their outcome would shape the fate of all humankind. Despite severe repressions by the authorities, the Communist Party expanded its influence over the masses, and from 1941 to 1943 grew 4-fold.

In a number of East Asian and South-East Asian countries (China, Korea, Vietnam), the anti-fascist national liberation war grew into victorious popular revolutions which achieved more than liberation from colonial oppression. They implemented the goals of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution. Relying on the material, moral and political support of the Soviet Union, the peoples of China, Korea and Vietnam led the national liberation revolutions to full victory and established people's democratic governments. The national democratic revolutions in Asian countries had grown from national liberation movements, as was the case with national democratic revolutions in a number of European states.

Revolutions in Asian countries were marked by certain peculiarities distinguishing them from the revolutions in Central and South-Eastern Europe. The Asian countries before the revolution had been extremely backward colonial or semi-colonial states with many remnants of feudal or even primitive society. Feudal relations were the predominant relations of production. The feudal and comprador bourgeoisie constituted the chief social base for the domination of foreign capital. The peculiarities and distinguishing features of the national democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolutions in Asia and the forms of revolutionary changes were shaped by the correlation of internal and external forces and the mass struggle against colonial oppression, Japanese invaders in the first place. The revolutions in these countries were aimed against the domination of foreign imperialists, comprador bourgeoisie, and the feudal class. The scope of general democratic transformations brought about by the revolutions was immeasurably greater in the Asian countries than in European people's democracies.

National democratic revolutions in Asian countries were distinguished from preceding revolutions of this type by a deeper and more progressive content. Their core was the revolutionary resolution of the agrarian problem in favour of the working people. In China, Korea and Vietnam, as in European states, the working class and not the national bourgeoisie was the leading and chief driving force of the revolution. Its allies were peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie, national bourgeoisie and patriotic intelligentsia. Led by the working class, they united in the broad national unions

directed against bureaucratic capital, feudal lords and imperialism. Mongolia was an exception. The country had no working class. Therefore the 1921 revolution there was achieved by the toiling peasantry under the leadership of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and in alliance with and the aid of the Soviet working class. The communist parties guiding national democratic revolutions were able to involve the national bourgeoisie in the liberation struggle. Notwithstanding its vacillations, it either took a direct part in the liberation movement on the side of workers and peasants or remained neutral. But, though it was a driving force of the revolution, the national bourgeoisie was not its leader in China, Korea and Vietnam.

The strengthening of national and anti-imperialist alliances made it possible to achieve deep-going revolutionary-democratic changes. These created the necessary prerequisites for the national democratic revolutions' development into socialist revolutions. The presence of communist parties in Korea, China and Vietnam and their leading role in the liberation movements facilitated the establishment of the national democratic political system and laid the basis for the transition to socialist construction and the national democratic revolutions' development into socialist revolutions.

In the Asian and African countries which were controlled by British, US, French and other imperialists during the war, and where the working class, for a number of reasons, could not achieve leadership in the national liberation movement, the anti-fascist struggle did not develop into a popular revolution. However, even there the intensification of mass struggles against imperialist oppressors led to national independence.

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The victory over the fascist-militarist bloc was an event of greatest historical significance and a landmark in the history of mankind. It was, above all, a victory scored by socialism over the shock forces of imperialism, victory of progress over reaction, of humanism over barbarity. Led by the CPSU, the Soviet people and its Armed Forces defended the cause of the Great October Revolution and socialism, and made the major contribution to the routing of fascist Germany and its allies and saving the civilised world. This is their greatest merit. Historical truth—notwithstanding the continuous attempts at bourgeois and revisionist falsifications—can be neither concealed nor distorted.

The victory over Nazi Germany and its allies hastened the



course of social development the world over, united the anti-fascist liberation struggle with the struggle against the aggressive forces of imperialism and reaction and for social and national liberation in the post-war period. The position of progressive, democratic, and peace-loving forces was strengthened. The influence of communist and workers' parties grew significantly. In the war, imperialism as a system was noticeably weakened and lost some of its positions, the sphere of its domination was curtailed. Socialism, on the contrary, emerged from the war stronger. Its authority and influence on the world scene increased. The socialist world system emerged and is progressing. The victory speeded up the disintegration of the colonial system which resulted in its total collapse. The profound significance of the historic victory over the fascist-militarist bloc achieved by the Resistance fighters and the peoples and armies of the anti-fascist and anti-militarist coalition lies also in that it has demonstrated that war must be opposed before its outbreak by consolidated and vigorous actions of peace-loving forces. All the more so today, when imperialists, above all of the United States, in disregard of the lessons of history have declared a new crusade against socialism. They are seeking military supremacy, intensifying the arms race, attempting to dictate to sovereign nations from the position of strength.

The rise of the international communist and working-class movement was a major historical outcome of the anti-fascist struggle and the defeat suffered by imperialism's strike force in World War II. The fight against fascism was a serious political school for the working class, elevating its class consciousness and organisation. Thanks to this the working class has a greater desire for unity of its ranks and of all democratic forces on the national and international levels. International democratic associations were formed: the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), and others.

Communists were in the vanguard of the struggle waged in the capitalist countries, colonies and dependencies against fascism and militarism. Their inalienable ties with the masses were one of major factors for success. The great teaching of Marx, Engels and Lenin constitutes for all Communists a source of strength, vigour, and inspiration and the guidelines for achieving victory. The CPSU's selfless struggle inspired Communists all over the world in their fight against fascism and militarism. Communist parties amassed an immense store of political, organisational, ideological and military experience. Their cadres were steeled in the course of the bitter struggles. The experience of Communists and Socialists in

their common struggle against fascism and militarism and in overcoming the split in the labour movement has been of vast importance. Equally valuable was the experience of the creation and work of broad anti-fascist national fronts. Militant proletarian unity providing the basis for national unity of all anti-fascist forces developed in severe battles.

Under the banners of the Comintern, the international communist movement traversed a long path, acquiring a truly worldwide character. The Comintern fully justified itself as a historically preconditioned organisational form of inter-relationships among communist parties. However, in the spring of 1943, representatives of communist parties unanimously decided to dissolve the Communist International. Its dissolution was based upon the profound differences in the ways of the historical development in these countries, in the difference of the socio-economic formations, and in the different levels of political and social development. Uneven levels of workers' political consciousness and organisation preconditioned the differences in the tasks facing various working-class contingents. As communist parties developed qualitatively and quantitatively and the internal and external situations of their countries became more complicated, the Comintern became obsolete as an expression of the existence of a single directing centre. The conditions that had developed in World War II demanded greater independence on the part of communist parties. The decision to dissolve the Comintern demonstrated the boldness and political maturity of the communist parties, their development as a national force, their loyalty to the vital interests of the workers' movement and their ability to subject to these interests the forms and methods of struggle. The struggle was headed by prominent leaders of the communist movement: Georgy Dimitrov, Klement Gotwald, Ajoy Ghosh, Jose Diaz, Dolores Ibarruri, Marcel Cachin, Victorio Codovilla, Otto Kuusinen, Vasil Kolarov, Johann Koplenig, Bela Kun, Julian Lenski, Wilhelm Pieck, Harry Pollitt, Luis Carlos Prestes, Sen Katayama, Ernst Thalmann, Maurice Thorez, Palmiro Togliatti, Tim Buck, Walter Ulbricht, William Z. Foster, Ho Chi Minh and many others.

Communist parties suffered great losses in the war years. By the outbreak of the war, the Communist Party of Germany had lost about 70 per cent of its members. Thousands of the most active Communists gave their lives in the fight against Hitlerism and for the interests of the working people. Among them: Ernst Thalmann, Ernst Schneller, Anton Saefkow, Theodor Neubauer, Georg Schumann. The French Communist Party lost 75,000 members, the Yugoslav Communist Party—50,000, the Italian—40,000, the Greek—50,000, the

Czechoslovak—25,000, the Polish—25,000, and the CPSU—3 million members. Their ranks were joined by advanced workers, peasants and intellectuals. In 1939, there were 61 communist parties embracing 4 million people. In 1945, there were 76 communist parties with a total membership exceeding 20 million people.<sup>1</sup> The communist parties became a great international and national force. The international communist movement advanced a major step towards making itself the most influential political force of the present time.

### *Conclusion*

The survey of the activities of the workers' and communist movement in the first one hundred years of its existence (from the 1830s to the mid-1940s) brings out the common trends that have been developed in the subsequent decades.

These one hundred years saw how working class emerged on the political scene, first in some of the more advanced countries and then on a world scale, as a powerful, organised and independent progressive force to begin a revolutionary struggle against social and national oppression, for the rights and interests of the working people, for the happiness and welfare of nations, for fair relations among people in each state and among all nations.

The world working class was steadily growing in number: from under 10 million in the mid-19th century to about 300 million, or almost one-third of the economically active population, in the middle of this century. As it was growing in number, it was becoming increasingly mature and better organised. When the workers entered upon their first independent actions and were setting up the first proletarian organisations, that is, when the working-class movement was being born, the proletariat, or the working class, in capitalist countries stood out among the diverse general democratic masses as an independent social force. And the class awareness of the proletariat began to grow.

Within the span of one hundred years, the working-class movement traversed not an easy path from spontaneous to conscious actions; from isolated outbursts of protest against oppression and exploitation to revolutionary mass actions (e.g. the Paris Commune in 1871, the victorious socialist revolution in Russia in 1917); from limited, mainly economic, demands to a purposeful and organised political struggle for power and further on to building a socialist society.

As capitalism was growing, since the turn of the 19th century in more developed capitalist countries, and since the mid-19th century in a number of dependent countries and colonies in America and Asia, the workers began to form trade unions. The unions were gradually growing and gaining strength. In the middle of the last century, tens of thousands of workers were in trade unions and by the mid-20th

<sup>1</sup> *History of World War II, 1939-1945*, Vol. 12, Voenizdat, Moscow, 1982, p. 102 (in Russian).



century their membership exceeded 200 million. As the workers acquired class awareness they began to form their political organisations. First, international revolutionary organisations were set up—the Communist League (1847-1852) and the International Working Men's Association, or the First International (1846-1876). Then national socialist (social-democratic) parties emerged in Europe and America in the last thirty years of the 19th century and early in this century. In the international union of these parties, known as the Second International (1889-1914), there emerged three trends: revolutionary, reformist and centrist.

After the Great October Socialist Revolution other revolutionary communist parties, besides the Russian party of Bolsheviks, were formed and joined in the Third, Communist International. Simultaneously, the reformist parties grew more active and restored the Second International in 1919, which was later reorganised into the Labour and Socialist International (1923-1940).

The Great October Revolution ushered in a new historical epoch, in which precisely the working class became the central force. That revolution, accomplished by the proletariat, by the oppressed working people of Russia, marked a turning point in world history, indicated the main direction and trends of world development and started the irreversible process of replacement of capitalism by a new, communist socio-economic system. The Soviet working class rallied all working people round itself and set out to build a new, socialist society. That social revolution was of world historic significance: it ended once and for all the ages-old reign of private property and abolished the exploitation of man by man. In the Soviet Union socialist society was, on the whole, built. Thus the working class has proved in practice that it could not only destroy outdated exploiter relations, but build a new society whose noble slogan "Everything for the sake of man, for the benefit of man" is being firmly upheld by all working people.

The Great October Revolution gave a powerful impetus to the struggle of the proletariat against oppression and exploitation in capitalist countries and inspired the peoples in the colonies and dependent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America to engage in a massive struggle for liberation. Precisely the world working class and the Soviet Union, its off-spring, played a decisive part in building a broad anti-fascist coalition and routing the dark forces of fascism, reaction and militarism in World War II, thus putting an end to the horrible war unleashed by imperialism. This created the essential conditions for the victory of people's revolutions in a number of countries in Europe and Asia and for

starting national liberation revolutions which brought about the downfall of the colonial system.

Mankind's development from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century shows beyond any doubt that social progress in the world is associated precisely with the working class as the main creator of material values and a consistent fighter for a happy life of the working people, for peace and cooperation among nations. World development in the latter half of this century has shown that, despite the changes in the social make-up of human society, the working class was, and remains to be, the chief locomotive of social progress, the main revolutionary class of the modern epoch.

The Communists have been in the van of the working class since the 1840s. The communist movement emerged as an international force under the guidance of the founders of scientific communism—Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. The Communist League, the first communist organisation which made scientific socialism its ideological foundation, was an international organisation, even though German revolutionaries made up the majority in it. During the one hundred years since the League was founded the number of Communists in the world increased from a few hundreds to 20 millions and by 1946 they operated in 78 countries. The path traversed by the communist movement was hard, indeed. There were victories and defeats on that path, and the Communists had to make many sacrifices before they became a large political force in the world.

There have been quite a few ideological and political trends which enjoyed definite success and influence in society. Having flashed like a lightning, many of them were unable to withstand the harsh realities of life, died away soon and were forgotten. But the communist movement, overcoming immense difficulties, was growing ever stronger, expanding its influence, despite plottings by its enemies, defying repressions and terror inflicted on Communists by the propertied classes, imperialism and reaction. Why then did the communist movement, for all the vicissitudes of its development, during these one hundred years turned into one of the most influential political forces and attained so great achievements?

Let us consider a few factors explaining this.

From its inception the communist movement was the spokesman of the most progressive social force—the working class and all working people. Communists were guided in their activities not by egoistic ambitions but by the immediate and future interests of the proletarians, of all working people. The noble tasks of protecting the interests of the working people have been to them part of their efforts to attain the

great class goals: to put an end to the rule of capital, to totally abolish exploitation of man by man, and build a society of good and justice, in which the free development of each man is a condition of a free development of all, and in which conditions are provided for the all-round development of the individual. Precisely Communists, always remaining faithful to their class, headed the struggle waged by the Russian working class and led it to victory in 1917. Precisely Communists helped the Russian working class to remodel drastically every sphere of the life of society in the interest of the working people and to turn a backward country into a powerful and advanced state, which has become a major factor of social progress and a stronghold of all revolutionary forces and liberation movements.

It was Communists who at the Seventh Comintern Congress boldly admitted their mistakes in the name of the higher interests of their class and all working people, rose above the differences that divided the revolutionary and reformist trends in the working-class movement and called for setting up a united workers' and popular front against fascism and war. That was a display of great political wisdom of the Communists, of their ability to place the interests of the workers and all toiling people above purely party interests. When the forces of fascism and militarism, these enemies of progress, democracy and the independence of the peoples, turned out to be stronger than the forces opposed to them and dragged mankind in World War II, precisely Communists did all they could to organise and unite not only workers, but all anti-fascist forces for the defeat of fascism and militarism, for restoring peace on earth by routing the sworn enemies of peace. Of the 20 million human lives sacrificed in the freedom struggle against fascist barbarians, a few million were the lives of Communists. The communist parties were consistent fighters for the interests of the working class and champions of the interests of their own peoples and of progressive ideas the world over.

So, close ties with the working class, the chief motive force of social progress, and the consistent struggle for its vital needs and long-term class interests were the main source of the growing strength and influence of the communist movement during the one hundred years reviewed in the book.

The national liberation struggle of the peoples against national and colonial oppression has always been a major factor of social progress. From the outset the communist movement has been fighting not only for the social emancipation of the oppressed working people, but also for the freedom and equality of all nations. *Manifesto of the Com-*

*unist Party*, the first programme document of the movement, says: "In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to."<sup>1</sup> Last century, when a number of nations in Europe were oppressed by others, Marx, Engels and their followers supported the national liberation struggle waged, for instance, by the Irish and Polish peoples. Marx regarded the Irish national liberation movement as an ally of the English working class, and its success as a precondition enabling the English proletariat to go over to the positions of revolutionary struggle.<sup>2</sup>

Marx levelled uncompromising criticism at the colonial policy pursued by the great powers: "The profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilisation lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies, where it goes naked."<sup>3</sup> The founders of scientific socialism watched keenly the way the popular uprisings proceeded in China and India in the mid-19th century. They thoroughly studied the victorious actions by the peoples against the colonialists—the risings of Latin Americans against the Spanish colonial rule in 1810-1826, and the effective resistance of the Afghan people to British invaders during the 1838-1842 Anglo-Afghan war. They predicted that socially and economically backward countries could advance towards socialism by-passing the capitalist phase of development. They noted with striking perspicacity the mutual influence of the revolutionary events in the West and in the East and in fact started the process of revealing the historical trend towards the merger of the socialist movement of the proletariat in the capitalist countries and the liberation movement of the peoples in the colonies. This trend, which was in an embryonic state then, grew into a powerful factor of the revolutionary process. In the later period, Communists did a great deal to develop this trend.

It was Communists who stressed at the Third Congress of the Comintern in 1921 the significance of the movement in the colonies: "It has undergone great change since the beginning of the twentieth century: millions and hundreds of millions, in fact the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe, are now coming forward as independent, active and revolutionary factors. It is perfectly clear that in the

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 503.

<sup>2</sup>See Karl Marx, "Confidential Communication", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup>Karl Marx, "The Future Results of British Rule in India", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, 1979, p. 221.



impending decisive battles in the world revolution, the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will, perhaps, play a much more revolutionary part than we expect."<sup>1</sup>

The Communists charted a political line which the Comintern formulated in the following way: "There is a need for direct aid by all communist parties to the revolutionary movements in the dependent nations and the colonies."<sup>2</sup> The Communists made a point of promoting cooperation between the oppressed peoples of the East and revolutionary Russia, because, Lenin said, "this revolutionary movement of the peoples of the East can now develop effectively, can reach a successful issue, only in direct association with the revolutionary struggle of our Soviet Republic against international imperialism."<sup>3</sup> Support for the national liberation struggle of the peoples had profound significance, since the workers in the advanced countries "will not be victorious without the aid of the working people of all the oppressed colonial nations, first and foremost, of Eastern nations."<sup>4</sup> Therefore the Communist International advanced this slogan: "Workers of All Countries and All Oppressed Peoples, Unite!"

It saw the most effective means of struggle against colonial oppression in building an anti-imperialist front, and to that end the Communist International should join temporary agreements, and even alliances with bourgeois democrats in the colonies and backward countries, but it should not merge with them, preserving the independence of the proletarian movement even in the most embryonic state.<sup>5</sup> The Communist International equipped the revolutionaries in the colonies and dependencies of the East with a well grounded conclusions concerning the prospects of the social, economic and political development of the peoples in these countries. In the new conditions, it deepened the conclusions made by Marx and Engels on the possibility for these peoples to advance towards socialism by-passing the capitalist phase.

After the Great October Socialist Revolution the Communists of the East took direct part in the struggle of their

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 481-82.

<sup>2</sup>*The Communist International. Documents. 1919-1932*, Moscow, 1933, p. 128 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, November 22, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 151.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>5</sup>*The Communist International...*, p. 129.

peoples against colonialism, for national liberation. The working people of revolutionary Russia, led by the Bolsheviks, and Communists in the imperialist and all other capitalist countries supported the liberation struggle of the peoples by all means available—ideological, political, moral and material. In the period between the world wars, large revolutionary battles flared up in a number of dependencies and colonies (China and Mongolia, Morocco and Syria). Meanwhile, in many other countries the peoples were gathering strength for crucial battles for freedom and independence. Where the Communists managed to solve the important problem of adjusting "the Communist Party (its membership, special tasks) to the level of the *peasant* countries of the colonial East",<sup>1</sup> they subsequently won big victories in the struggle for national liberation and social emancipation (Vietnam, China and Korea) thanks to the favourable conditions provided by the defeat of the more reactionary forces of imperialism, colonialism and militarism. On the other hand, in the countries where the Communists failed to solve this problem and become the leading force in the liberation struggle waged by their peoples, or where the communist parties had not yet taken shape, the national bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces took the initiative in the struggle against colonialist oppression and imperialist exploitation, leaving a specific class imprint on the subsequent social, economic and political development of their countries. But there, too, local Marxist-Leninists contributed as much as they could to the struggle for national liberation.

Thus, the original contribution made by Communists in the work on problems related to the liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples, their active participation in this struggle, and all-round support to the nascent national liberation movement—that major force of social progress—were the second source of the growth of prestige and significance of the communist movement in the period reviewed in the book.

That the Communists raised and helped solve major problems facing the whole of humanity was another reason why they became a vanguard force promoting humanity's progress.

In the middle of last century, when the communist movement was just taking shape, Marx and Engels regarded the liberation of the exploited working people and whole nations from oppression as a most important task facing mankind, and the proletariat was to make the main contribution

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Remarks on the Report of A. Sultan-Zade Concerning the Prospects of a Social Revolution in the East", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 202.

to the accomplishment of that task. Already in *Manifesto of the Communist Party* the founders of scientific socialism stressed: "The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority."<sup>1</sup> Upon accomplishing a socialist revolution and becoming a ruling class, they said, the proletariat would abolish the old relations of production, eliminate the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms, do away with the exploiter classes, and set the stage for eliminating classes altogether. Some time later, Engels repeatedly stressed a major Marxist idea that the proletariat, this oppressed and exploited class, cannot emancipate itself from the yoke of the bourgeois class which oppresses and exploits it, unless it at the same time frees forever the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles.<sup>2</sup> That was so because at the time the proletariat's class interest coincided with general democratic aspirations of humankind.

Right before the start of the 20th century, Lenin formulated the top-priority immediate tasks of the Russian proletariat (the overthrow of tsarist autocracy and the winning of political freedoms) and stressed that this would be not only in the interests of the working class but was in the interests of "social development as a whole". He expressed the idea which in our time evokes great interest and had become immensely important: "From the standpoint of the basic ideas of Marxism, the interests of social development are higher than the interests of the proletariat."<sup>3</sup> How should one understand this? This was not, of course, an opposition of the interests of the proletariat to the interests of social development. Lenin meant that in relation to the purely class interests of the proletariat, expressing only its aspirations (immediate and those of the future), preference is given to the interests of the progress of the whole of society, which, corresponding simultaneously to the goals of the proletariat as well, meet in the final analysis the interests of mankind as a whole.

With the start of the 20th century, that is, after capitalism entered the imperialist phase, the war and peace issue came increasingly into focus. But even before that, Marxists, proceeding from the class interests of the proletariat and the tasks of freeing it from exploitation, came out resolutely against the wars of aggression, the imperialist wars unleashed by the

propertied classes (see Chapter Three of the book). But in the pre-war decade the task of averting World War I, considering its possible scope and disastrous effect for the broad proletarian masses and for the other sections of the population, was acquiring a clearly general democratic character. At the same time, the efforts to avert that war brought out also the general aspect common to the whole of mankind, for the impending world carnage threatened not only millions of people, but the progress of human society. In these conditions the struggle launched by true communist revolutionaries for the overthrow of the power of the propertied classes, which plunged mankind in that war, lent urgency to the class tasks which merged with general democratic tasks and those facing the whole of mankind. This was precisely the meaning of the most human decree adopted by Soviet power—the Decree on Peace.

Before and during World War II, in which tens of millions of people took direct part and which involved to a varying degree the whole of mankind, the struggle waged by the Communists first to prevent the war, and when it broke out to end it through the efforts of a broad front of anti-fascist and anti-war forces, contained not only a general democratic aspect but an aspect common to all mankind. Because the measures fascism tried to effect could not only halt progress, but push human civilisation backwards, to a new type of slavery. The fascists pursued not only a policy of enslavement but also a policy of physical extermination of whole nations, drawing no distinctions between classes and social strata.

The common human aspect of safeguarding peace grew most pronounced as the world entered upon the nuclear and space era, and when the question "To be or not to be?" confronted mankind in all its tragic reality. Communists were first to sound the alarm, calling upon all people of goodwill to defend peace and the security of nations and to come out against the arms race and against the dangerous policy of brinkmanship pursued by the reactionary politicians associated with the military-industrial complex (this will be dwelt upon in greater detail in the second volume of the book). The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is contributing a great deal to the noble cause of safeguarding peace. It stressed at its 27th Congress: "The danger looming over mankind has never been so awesome. But then the possibilities for safeguarding and strengthening peace have never been so real. By uniting their efforts the peoples can and must avert the threat of nuclear annihilation... It is possible to avert war and to save mankind from catastrophe. This is the historical mission of socialism, of all the progres-

<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 495.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party; Preface to the German Edition of 1883", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. One, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup>V.I. Lenin, "A Draft Programme of Our Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1977, p. 236.



sive and peace-loving forces of the world."<sup>1</sup> "The struggle against the nuclear threat, against the arms race, for the preservation and strengthening of universal peace remains the fundamental direction of the Party's activities in the international arena."<sup>2</sup>

The Communists are doing all in their power to achieve the solution of other global problems as well.

So, the third source of the growing strength and influence of the communist parties in the world is the sincere and selfless faithfulness of Marxist-Leninists to the cause of solving the problems confronting mankind as a whole, above all those of preserving peace and preventing aggressive, imperialist wars, specifically a catastrophic and devastating world war, establishing a non-violent and nuclear-weapon free world, offering nations a free choice of a social system, policy and ideology. In these noble activities the Communists go side by side with other anti-war forces, with all democratic mass movements.

As historical experience has shown, yet another major source of strength for the communist movement is its loyalty to the creative theory of scientific socialism—Marxism and Marxism-Leninism. Chapter Two gives a concise description of the main features of Marxism, of its scientific, revolutionary and creative character. These features were fully accepted by Lenin and further developed in Leninism. The one hundred years reviewed in the book show that when Communists were devising and implementing their policy with reliance on the basic principles of this theory and with due consideration of new realities, they invariably won big victories.

This creative approach to the new realities of the world as a whole, and of Russia in particular, on the basis of scientific theory, enabled the Bolsheviks led by Lenin properly to assess the situation at the start of the 20th century, draw up a correct political line, head the struggle waged by the working class and all the oppressed and exploited, contribute to the accomplishment of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the greatest event of the 20th century, and ensure the building of a socialist society. Socialism was built in extremely difficult conditions. But, despite the major mistakes and even deformations made in the process, it has demonstrated the indisputable advantages of the new society—the next stage in the progress of mankind—over capit-

alism. It gives answers to questions which the bourgeois system is unable to answer.

Precisely the creative application of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine to an extremely backward country helped the Mongolian revolutionaries, relying on the aid and experience of the Soviet state and the Comintern, to lead their people after the victorious people's revolution of 1921 along the non-capitalist path of development to the triumph of socialism.

Conversely, a departure from the basic principles of Marxism, just like the dogmatic treatment of theory when attempts are made to solve new problems in the old ways, led Communists to setbacks and, at times, to heavy reversals. Chapter Four shows well that the attempts by a number of the right-wing leaders of the Second International to renounce the basic principles of Marxism were politically untenable. A slide down from class positions to ideas of class collaboration, idealisation of bourgeois democracy and in fact abandonment of the class struggle and renunciation of the ultimate goals of the working-class movement, and an unprincipled attitude to policy brought about the collapse of the Second International and the split and heavy defeats of the working-class movement.

There were other mistakes which had a quite negative effect for Communists: the sectarian attitudes which emerged in the Comintern since the 1920s, attempts to solve problems arising in the new situation of revolutionary decline by methods adopted during the revolutionary upswing in 1917-1921, and inability to produce for several years a new approach aimed at mobilising the masses to fight against the fascist threat. That position of the Communist International had a negative impact also on the policies of its communist parties. Alvaro Cunhal, General Secretary of the Portuguese Communist Party, wrote about that period: "Prior to the Seventh /Comintern.—Ed./ Congress the political line of the PCP was obviously infected by sectarian and volutarist illusions."<sup>1</sup>

The way to a new strategic orientation ran through the bitter experience of setbacks and defeats of the workers' movement in a number of countries (above all Italy and Germany), through a search and discoveries (above all by the French Communists), and through the realisation of the truth of Lenin's idea that "a Marxist must take cognisance of real life, of the true facts of *reality*, and not cling to a theory of yesterday, which, like all theories, at best only outlines the main and the general, only *comes near* to embracing

<sup>1</sup> *The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. A New Edition*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1986, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1986, p. 79.

<sup>1</sup> Alvaro Cunhal, *O partido com paredes de vidro*, Editorial Avante!, SAREL, Lisbon, 1985, p. 252.

life in all its complexity".<sup>1</sup> And, finally, this path ran through admitting that some former assessments and guidelines of Communists had been wrong (the incorrect assessment of the essence of social-democracy and revision of the political line of the communist parties with regard to social-democratic parties; the wrong view on the role of the national bourgeoisie in the colonies and dependent countries, the return to the Leninist tactics of a united anti-imperialist front, etc.).<sup>2</sup>

Only the drastic turn in the policy of the Comintern, based on a creative approach to the situation in the world in the mid-1930s, and the bold overcoming of mistakes enabled the Communists to formulate a new strategy at the Seventh Comintern Congress, a strategy giving priority to the struggle against fascism and war and for democracy by establishing a united workers' and popular front, by rallying most diverse social and political forces on the anti-fascist platform. The consistent application of this strategy helped to defeat fascism and provide conditions for new major victories of progressive forces in the world. This greatly contributed to the subsequent victory of the people's democratic revolutions in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

So, loyalty to the basic principles of theory and a bold and creative approach to new realities on the basis of the theory of Marx, Engels and Lenin is another important source of the Communists' influence.

A factor of extreme importance is also that Communists not only express the interests of workers and other working people, of oppressed and exploited nations. They see in the working masses the main motive force of social development and act accordingly. Lenin formulated perhaps most accurately the Marxist approach to this problem: "To do service to the masses and express *their* interests, having correctly conceived those interests, the advanced contingent, the organi-

sation, must carry on all its activity among the masses, drawing from the masses all the best forces without any exception, at every step verifying carefully and objectively whether contact with the masses is being maintained and whether it is a live contact. In this way, and *only* in this way, does the advanced contingent train and enlighten the masses, expressing *their* interests, teaching them organisation and directing *all* the activities of the masses along the path of conscious class politics."<sup>1</sup>

Communists have always seen their task in "doing service to the masses and expressing their interests", that is, helping the working people to fight for their goals which *objectively* meet their needs. And this means that Communists serve the popular masses, expressing their needs and cares, and are not "commanders" or "dictators" seeking to impose their own will. Communists never seek to win over the masses merely to satisfy a selfish ambition. Their purpose is to be with the masses under any circumstances, to help them realise their objective needs and interests and to fight for them. In order to fight the masses should attain a definite level of political consciousness, and the Communists see their duty in educating and organising them. Precisely these ideas motivated the Marxists who worked in the First International. At the time, the situation was good for combining scientific socialism with the working-class movement, and for relieving the workers' movement of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influence.

The communist parties of the Third International had the same motives (despite some miscalculations and mistakes mentioned above). The laconic slogan "To the Masses!", formulated at the Third Congress, was advanced at most of the congresses that followed. In their work among the masses the Communists carefully studied their sentiments, avoiding two extremes: first, "in no case to endeavour to outrun the people's development, but to wait until a movement forward occurred as a result of their own experience and their own struggle",<sup>2</sup> and second, not to drag behind the masses, assenting to their sentiments and always trying to suit them, and never lose sight of the ultimate goal. The Communists were guided by the principle about which Lenin wrote the following: "When there exist objective conditions which retard the growth of the political consciousness and class independence of the proletarian masses, one must be able patiently and steadfastly to work hand in hand with them,

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Letters on Tactics", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>It would be most appropriate in this context to recall the truly unfading idea of Lenin's: "What applies to individuals also applies—with necessary modifications—to politics and parties. It is not he who makes no mistakes that is intelligent. There are no such men, nor can there be. It is he whose errors are not very grave and who is able to rectify them easily and quickly that is intelligent." And further: "A political party's attitude towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it fulfils *in practice* its obligations towards its *class* and the *working people*. Frankly acknowledging a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analysing the conditions that have led up to it, and thrashing out the means of its rectification—that is the hallmark of a serious party; that is how it should perform its duties, and how it should educate and train its *class*, and then the *masses*." (V.I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 57).

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "How Vera Zasulich Demolishes Liquidationism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 409.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Cossacks' and Red Army Deputies, November 6-9, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 141.



making no concessions in principles but not refraining from activity *right in the midst* of the proletarian masses."<sup>1</sup>

When the Communists acted according to this principle: "Be with the masses, in the midst of them. Know their *sentiments*. Know *everything*. Understand the masses. Be able to approach them and win their *absolute* trust. The leaders must not outrun the masses they lead, as the vanguard must not outrun the whole army of labour",<sup>2</sup> and remained loyal to the basic principles of their theory and policy, they invariably were equal to the demands of their time, and achieved success. But when this principle was forgotten, even if temporarily or partially, or if it was underestimated, that caused failure and even defeat.

An important source of the Communists' strength was that the communist movement emerged and was growing as an internationalist force. Their internationalism means, first, their voluntary and equal cooperation and effective mutual assistance, whatever the countries and conditions they operated in. In their policy the communist parties invariably sought to harmonise the national and international interests and tasks of the working people in their countries. Cooperation between parties varied in form, depending on the concrete situation: within a decentralised international organisation (the Second International), or in centralised organisations (the First and especially the Third International), or outside any international organisations. But one thing was unchanged—the militant and effective solidarity of Communists of various countries. Second, their internationalism means intensive work to promote solidarity and cooperation among all contingents of the working class in various countries in the struggle for common goals. In that work they paid special attention to strengthening mutual support between the proletarians in capitalist countries and the working class in the country of the Great October Revolution—a major force in the revolutionary struggle, and a bastion of peace, social progress and the national liberation of oppressed peoples. Third, internationalism means the mobilisation of all forces and movements for effective solidarity with the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist liberation struggle of the peoples, with all democratic and progressive forces, and in the 1920s and 1940s it also meant building a broad unity of anti-fascist, anti-imperialist and anti-war forces.

The spirit of international solidarity has always permeated the activities of Communists in their struggle for the

immediate needs and more remote goals of the working people and in the struggle for national liberation, for peace and the security of the peoples. The first steps in this direction were made from the late 1840s through the 1860s, especially after the formation of the First International. Great examples of international proletarian solidarity were demonstrated at the time of the Paris Commune which, according to Marx, was immediately received with joyful cries of approval by the entire international proletariat. In order to win, "a revolution must have solidarity"—this is the conclusion drawn by Marxists from the experience of the Paris Commune. Of great significance was the decision adopted at the Paris Congress of the Second International in 1889 to make May 1 the day of struggle by the workers for their rights and the day of international militant actions by the working people in various countries. May 1 became the day of international proletarian solidarity among the working people of the whole world, symbolising their common interests and unity of action in the struggle against capital, against its anti-popular and militarist policy. The October Revolution came as a great triumph of the ideas and policy of proletarian internationalism. This was expressed, first, in that the Bolshevik Party, creatively applying the international scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism, "brought together into one powerful stream the proletarian struggle for socialism, the peasants' struggle for land, the national liberation struggle of Russia's oppressed peoples, and the nationwide movement against imperialist war and for peace, and directed that stream towards overthrowing the bourgeois system".<sup>1</sup> Second, the idea of the unity and solidarity of all the oppressed working people, of all enslaved nations in the struggle against capital and its policy of aggression, war and class and national oppression, the idea advocated by the Bolshevik Party was implemented by the Land of Soviets since the victory of the October Revolution. The first decree issued by Soviet power—the Decree on Peace, and the practical measures to eliminate the exploitation of man by man, the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, which proclaimed just and democratic principles of international relations, had an immense influence on the peoples of many countries. The example of the October Revolution stirred the working people in capitalist countries to the struggle against exploiters, and the peoples in the colonies to the struggle against the colonialists who oppressed them. Third, the October Revolution caused the unprecedented growth of solidarity among the workers in the whole

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Meeting of the International Socialist Bureau", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, pp. 236-37.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 44, p. 497 (in Russian).

<sup>1</sup>The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. A New Edition, p. 8.

world with the revolution in Russia. The "Hands Off Soviet Russia!" movement reached vast proportions. "The workers of the whole world," Lenin wrote, "no matter in what country they live, greet us, sympathise with us, applaud us for breaking the iron ring of imperialist ties, of sordid imperialist treaties, of imperialist chains—for breaking through to freedom ... and raising the banner of peace, the banner of socialism for the whole world to see."<sup>1</sup> International proletarian solidarity proved invaluable for the victory of the Soviet system. Lenin wrote: "We were able to defeat the enemy because the sympathy of the workers of the whole world made itself felt at the most difficult moment."<sup>2</sup>

Not only workers, but all people of goodwill expressed solidarity with the republic of Soviets. The moving document issued in Delhi late in 1917 and printed in the Indian papers in January 1918, entitled "The Peoples of India Greet Soviet Russia", said: "Leaders of the Russian Revolution, India is amazed at the noble and humanitarian principles you have proclaimed as you took power into your hands. India implores Providence for giving you strength in upholding these noble ideals."<sup>3</sup> The document was signed: "The Peoples of India".

Fourth, the Great October Revolution immediately became the material stronghold of the revolutionary, liberation and anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples. And not in the sense of exporting revolution to other countries, about which the anti-communists shouted from rooftops in a bid to export counter-revolution to Russia in those remote years, but in the sense of being the source of experience and real material support to the struggle that was already under way.

This explains why 80,000 Hungarians, 40,000 Chinese, tens of thousands of Germans, Czechs, Serbs, Poles, Romanians and other nationals defended the freedom and independence of revolutionary Russia shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet people in 1917-1921.

In the years that followed, Communists, despite numerous obstacles and contradictions, were the standard-bearers of effective international proletarian solidarity, which nourished other kinds of international solidarity displayed by other social forces—democratic, anti-imperialist, anti-war, anti-fascist, etc.

The events of the one hundred years examined in the book and the next forty years prompted the Communist Party of

the Soviet Union to conclude: "The communist movement draws its strength... from its class solidarity and equal co-operation among all fraternal parties in the struggle for common aims—peace and socialism."<sup>1</sup> In the new edition of its Programme, adopted by the 27th CPSU Congress, the Party declared: "In all of its activity the CPSU is invariably guided by the time-tested Marxist-Leninist principles of proletarian, socialist internationalism. It will contribute in every way possible to promoting the cohesion of the international communist movement on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, develop fraternal ties with all the Communist and Workers' parties, actively cooperate with them in the struggle for peace and against the danger of a nuclear catastrophe, and support their struggle in defence of the vital interests of the working people, for national liberation, democracy and socialism."<sup>2</sup>

Throughout their history the Communists have always worked to achieve one ultimate goal—to make the working man happy and ensure the necessary conditions for his harmonious development, removing all obstacles in the way towards this humane goal. Herein is the essence of the communist movement, which, from the time of Marx' and Engels' *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, spared no effort to build a society based on justice in which "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all".

<sup>1</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Letter to American Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Eighth All-Russia Conference of the R.C.P. (B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup>*Proletarian Solidarity of Working People in the Struggle for Peace, (1917-1924)*, Moscow, 1958, p. 44 (in Russian).

<sup>1</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, "Resolution of the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee", *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress*, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup>*The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. A New Edition*, p. 86.



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